

**Presidential Communications Office**

**Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE MOA SIGNING BETWEEN THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, 112 STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND 78 LOCAL UNIVERSITIES TO LAUNCH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT 10931 (FREE HIGHER EDUCATION LAW)**

[Delivered at the Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace | 13 June 2018]

Kindly sit down. Thank you for your courtesy.

Mabuti kay dalawang pages lang. I am running late to do some important signing.

Usually I go out of my written speech to convey some personal sentiments regarding government and governance. Since a lot of guys there down are also waiting and I am late and I apologize because I had to do some important paperwork.

Education... Ah huwag muna pala ito. Mali. *[laughter]*

Secretary Harry Roque and the other members of the Cabinet; Senator Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian; Representative Ann Hofer, hi ma’am, kumusta ka? Gumaganda ka, ma’am, *[laughter]* araw-araw pareho diyan sa... Huwag kayong magturuan, ikaw Joey; Representative Jose Maria Clemente “Joey” Salceda; officials of Commission on Higher Education led by its officer-in-charge Prospero De Vera; officials and members of the state and local universities and colleges; mga kasama ko sa gobyerno; mga kababayan.

Education is the single most important legacy that we can bestow on our youth. It opens doors for countless opportunities that will lead to [their] further empowerment, greater success and the realization of their individual aspirations.

At present, millions of Filipino youth are still having a hard time finishing their studies due to poverty. Many poor students are struggling to go to school simply because they have no money for allowance, transportation, books and projects and other miscellaneous expenses.

Let me cut here. One of the reasons why I’m really so passionate in my advocacy sa drugs pati crime and criminality is my constant --- our constant worry about the tomorrow of our children.

Tayo ho ay mahirap lang. And despite or despite of the massive infusion of money for education, kulang pa rin.

May pari ho dito? Kasi gusto ko magdasal muna tayo bago... Wala? Mabuti. Kasi kayong mga pari we are eternally at odds with each other.

Though I am or has been or have had a good Christian education, noong dumating ako sa gobyerno ang paradigm shift ko umiba. And this is of course... Well, we are not yet really in the overpopulated world. We’re trying to control Filipinos by not really imposing any abortion or any whatever that destroys the human life in the womb of the mother. But ‘yung tao napakarami.

I come from a place called Mindanao. And apparently from the looks of it in the years of my public service, Mindanao used to be I said the promise land for our --- parang breadbasket.

With the advent of the coming of cash crop instead of the food crop, kinukulang na tayo ngayon ng lupa and even to really satisfy or do we have the resources to answer for the food of the Filipino.

Kasi sa Mindanao, the choice lands there were eaten up by the cash crop guys. Iyong food crop, wala na masyado. And if you'd ask me, in the next how many years, we will just have to import rice. I do not believe that we can be rice sufficient. 'Yung sinabi ni Piñol na at the years end. Istorya man lang 'yon. Linti sa amon sa Makilala, ga damo sang bugas. Ga bulto-bulto sang bugas ah. Ti pagdating ng panahon, wa'y man bugas. Mag-import pa ta.

(TRANSLATION: In our town in Makilala, there is plenty of rice. But when the time comes that we run out of rice, we have to import.)

So in the last ruckus where there was reportedly mababa 'yung yield natin and also 'yung importation natin because ang bumper kasi nila gusto... If this is the ceiling 'yan diyan, the bumper is around here on. So we had a bit of trouble dito.

I had to cut some powers of Cabinet members for just being too shortsighted or jumping into others' territory, turf war. Ang sabi ko sa kanila, bakit hindi pumupuno 'yung up to the ceiling? Ang atin kasing buffer stock was only good for three to four days. You must be crazy.

It's always visual 'pag nakikita ng tao na 'yung bigas niya umaabot doon sa ceiling, that's a very consoling sight for him. Eh kung mangita sa... (If you search in...) Hanggang diyan lang 'yan, mu-ambak ngari gamay, unya mu-reduce na pud (and if it fluctuates), first-in, first-out, you'd never see the end of it.

So I said the guys put an inventory there. I do not care if we have to sell it at a lower price someday if there's a glut in the market. Tatal gobyerno man itong atin. We only go inside the private territory of merchants until and unless the supplies are no longer there.

So iyon ang ano ko dito sa ano. Ours... Kung wala na sanang gulo, Mindanao could really properly cultivated. Mindanao could supply the food that we are going to eat. But if we cannot solve the problem in time, magkakaroon tayo ng problema.

And I know in the coming days I hope that the BBL, however fractured it may be to the others, we will see the light of day and just maybe reserve the portion that are with issues during the Constitutional convention.

Never mind if it does not pass. If we opt to be a centralized form of government until now we maintain the system. But remember that ito namang... And even the presidents of colleges and everything, they have to go into semi... Rigmarole, 'yung sa pag-apply, paglabas, then you have to get the clearance. It's a highly centralized government.

But at the same time, we must also realize that to go into a --- I would not say loose but a newly structured government where we do not have the necessary transition, medyo delicato. Tingin ko lang. And so we hope someday that when the time comes, we'll be able to separate the chaff from the grain and come up with something that will benefit the people.

At present, millions of Filipino youth are still having a hard time finishing their studies due to poverty. Many poor students are struggling to go to school simply because they... I've read that. Sorry. Pabalik-balik na tayo.

This is why we have made it a priority to make quality education affordable and accessible to all. The signing of this Memorandum of Agreement between the Commission on Higher Education and almost 200 tertiary academic institutions is a crucial step in helping young Filipinos fulfill their dreams of

becoming productive members of our country's workforce through academic degrees and technical or vocational training.

I recognize the valuable efforts of Congress, CHED, TESDA, and other State Universities and Colleges, our Local Universities and Colleges, our Technical Vocational Institutions, and other partners for making this exclusive dream --- elusive dream rather—free quality tertiary education for all—a reality.

Ang problema mo pera. So we had this meeting with the --- sa Cabinet, kami. And we were talking about so many things that government could do or could not.

At ang isa doon, the single solitary voice was Leonor Briones. She said that the people must --- must pay their taxes. They have to pay for the government to work. There is no other way where we can raise the money for the needs of the Filipino people except through taxes.

So ang tao kailangan bumayad. We have so many ambitious projects trying to keeping up with the modern trend of education that giving it free, almost free for all.

But itong atin, because of the economy is not that good, it's improving but we still have more miles to go. And so sabi niya, hand in hand with this offer of ours, free education for all, halos universal na, people must realize also that they have to pay their taxes. At what bracket do we target, well that is for Congress to decide.

Kung talagang hindi makabayad, wala man tayong magawa doon but I will go for the sin taxes, I know that's your favorite. We go for a higher diyan sa sugar. And we discussed so many things where we can trace everything and I would just tell the people that you know, "if you want improvement on anything, practically all aspect of our governance would depend on taxes."

Alongside broadening access to tertiary education, we are also [prioritizing] the improvement of the quality of education in the Philippines. As we bring education closer to the poor students, we must also ensure that the quality of education is not compromised and its benefits are cascaded to all.

I therefore ask our state leaders and local educational institutions, our esteemed teachers, administrators and governance involved in the effective and efficient implementation of RA 10931 to do your best in fulfilling the respective mandates under the law.

Indeed, free education --- free quality tertiary education is a significant step towards further building the capacity of our people, most particularly in improving the lot of the underprivileged and the marginalized Filipinos.

Empowering our citizens and building our nation are indeed challenging but both rewarding and a beautiful task. It may be difficult from the start, but the results are, in the end will give our people the chance to lead productive, meaningful and comfortable lives.

Let us [all] look forward to a brighter future for our nation by uplifting the lives of the fellow Filipinos through accessible and quality education for all.

Before I say thank you, kami dito, ako, I am so passionate about my advocacy.

Remember that I only promised you about four things, basic things and that is why during the presidential debates, I was the last to finish because I realized that one minute 30 seconds could not give you anything. So I did it by bullets but reduced to the simplest, on simplest term.

I only promised four and I said I could not go into other advocacies that is not possible for now. I said I promised to stop graft and corruption and I'm doing it. You know very well that I'm doing it. I've been firing people, those even with me during the mayorship days in 1988.

Then I promised you that I have to destroy drugs because it will destroy us. And all of these things, dito binabasa ko, about the promise of the youth tomorrow, mawawala 'to.

And you say that there are many poor kaya 'yung iba, they have to go to outside of the Philippines.

Now, you are all educators, you know very well that when a family loses the father because he has to go to the Middle East to work, you will agree with me, I'm sure, that the family is already dysfunctional.

A family without the father, who have the children to see at the end of the day. It's a very terrible thing.

Now pagka 'yung tatay pati nanay aalis at 'yung mga anak nila iniwan lang doon sa mga tatay, nanay nila o sa relatives, my God, you see a totally, totally dysfunctional family.

And so what are the other... what's the underlying reason? It's poverty. So what is the remedy? The remedy of their poverty, they go out. So they endure hardships.

You know very well that, you read it everyday, the physical abuse and the food and everything, they all endure it.

Some, mga anak nila doon wala ng balita and only to find that five years after, mag-uwi siya, the guy, husband, has already another wife and madugo 'yan eh. Maski ba ang mukha na 'yung... dadalhin niya.

So pag-uwi niya, there's a ruckus in the family. It will not --- it will never return to normalcy. Ang masakit diyan is inuubos nila 'yung panahon na 'yan kakatrabaho. Five years is really too long for an ordinary human to endure this kind.

Kaya 'yung sa Kuwait, talagang... Well, something happened and puro kami galit. Galit na ako nung una but sabi ko kasi mahirap naman 'yung ganun.

It's not an issue about Kuwait. It's an issue about Filipinos returning and all of the shreds of filial relationships are gone.

At saka 'yung trabaho nila doon, tiniis nila 'yun, sinikmura nila. They swallowed everything para makapadala lang ng pera sa Pilipinas.

And yet, you have here a very serious rampaging problem of drugs at kung malaman nila na itong bata na ito receives a monthly sum, stipend or baon, honorarium, talagang I'd like to say it in the dialect but it's too... 'yung talagang didik --- until bibigay 'yung bata.

So coming home, they find a family that's drugged, addicted, and walang nakakatapos. A few in between the many thousands, meron. Kaya ako galit. Nakikita ko 'yung sakripisyo ng Pilipino ganun na lang.

Kaya kitang i\*\*, namum\*\*\*\*\* i\*\* ako. Pinup\*\*\*\*\* i\*\* ko lahat. Good that hindi sila pumatol nung... but I intend to go to Kuwait to thank them for the many things that they reconsidered.

I asked, I demanded one day off, but they can cook their own food, that will be guaranteed seven hours of sleep, and they can communicate, no confiscation of passports.

And all of these things were granted. Hindi ko naman akalain na because of the so many hurtful exchange of tirades, they would still go for a --- areglo.

And since all of my demands that I transmitted to the guys sa Labor pati sa Foreign Affairs, well sabi ko, maybe I will just have to go there and say, "I'm so sorry for the harsh words. But it is not very easy to accept just... Kayo na umintindi."

But on the other side of things, China is going to import many teachers beginning next year and they would need about almost, they say, so many thousands.

So gusto nila mag-English. That is in preparation for the eventual takeover of the United States. Malaki ang utang nitong mga g\*\*\* na ito, ayaw magbayad eh. *[laughter]* So they are all mortgaged and their souls.

If you have a three million utang, how do you suppose --- you can pay it. Ask Joey, eh ekonomista ka man. Paano 'yan? So they are preparing to talk in English so that they can communicate where the properties that's going to ibigay sa kanila. Wala mang bayad-bayad itong Amerikano.

Hindi man talaga nagbabayad 'yang mga y\*\*\* na 'yan sa totoo lang. *[laughter]* Wala akong bilib diyan sa mga... So... ang pati 'yung --- the ageing countries would be importing a lot of nurses and caregivers. In the meantime that we are poor.

Hayaan mo pagka maawa ang Diyos. Maybe in the fullness of God's time, we will have about... magyaman rin tayo, so mag-import tayo ng ano European, French, Español? Gawain natin mga boy itong mga buang na ito. *[laughter]*

Eh tatal ginawa man nila tayong boy diba? We were subjugated for 400 years. Why should we not also give the courtesy in return? Babagsak rin 'yan. At kung tayo na... Pwede mga Italyano, Español. Ang problema niyan mga asawa natin baka magtanan tuloy. *[laughter]*

Let us [all] look forward to a brighter future for our nation. We are uplifting the lives of Filipinos, I've said, and just keeping our fingers crossed.

But one thing, ako kung magpunta ako niyan nung nagkakampanya ako even dito. Sinabi ko talaga, "Makinig kayo ha, makinig kayo. 'Pag hindi --- ang anak ninyo walang edukasyon, hindi kayo makalabas dito. Believe me." Now magsabi sila, "Wala naman. Eh paano 'to, paano tayo makalabas?"

Well, now is the time it's almost universal, free na. It's a matter of tiyaga. If there's a will, there's a way. Look, me. I finished high school in five years. Natapos ko rin sa tiyaga. *[laughter]* Oo.

My daughter, Veronica, said, "Pa, 'yun bang ano mo, 'yung si --- 'yung matanda diyan, 'yung sa Cabinet mo, 'yung si ano, si Briones."

Sabi niya, "Bakit ba 'yan siya nag-buot-buot?" Ano Tagalog sa buot --- sa Bisaya buot-buot? Parang... "Bakit siya, siya lang ang nasusunod? Buot-buot..."

Sabi ko, "Nak, gusto kong sabihan si Briones, si Leonor. Ang problema kasi ang tatay mo first batch sa K-12." I finished the high school... Mahiya man... *[laughter]*

Sabihin ni Leonor, "Ba't ikaw? Ilan taon ba muna --- ang record mo? Transcript mo?" "Dala --- ma'am, dala pasyal man 'yan. Eskwela tapos pasyal, eskwela tapos pasyal."

My father died. He never had an inkling that... Alam mo sa Bisaya, there's a --- I don't know if it's an idiom or a Visayan cliché. 'Pag sinabi --- kayong mga Bisaya... 'di ba --- "Ikaw do..." Do is ikaw. "Hanggang pantalan ka lang. Naaawa ako sa'yo. Tingnan mo mga kapatid mo. Tingnan mo 'yung... Third honorable mention 'yung isa. Ikaw, kailan ka pa matapos ng...? 'Yung grado mo, tingnan mo, tingnan mo. Ito ba ang grado ng matinong tao?"

My father was a lawyer. My mother was a teacher, public school teacher.

Sabi ko, "Pa, okay naman 'yan." "Y\*\*\*... Paano ma-okay 'yan?"

Sabi ko, "Dahan-dahan lang total --- mag-75... Basta sa... Hindi mo naman kailangan 'yan 76, 77. Of what use is it to you? 95?"

Tingnan mo 'yan sila Dominguez. Aral kami. Nauna 'yan sila lahat. 95, consistent. Kindergarten kami, Ateneo. Valedictorian. Punta ng Columbia kung ano-ano na ang y\*\*\* ang ginagawa.

Tugade, he's a billionaire. Kaya huwag kayo maniwala intriga, intriga na ano... He was our valedictorian sa law school. Tingnan mo 'yung airport ng Cebu.

Mga 'yan --- gusto lang 'yan... Pinilit ko 'yan mag-trabaho sa akin. Hindi nag-apply. 'Yan sila lahat. Lorenzana, he's a valedictorian. Puro 'yan sila bright.

Yasay, 'yung you know. *[mimics Yasay]* "I like to talk in English anyway because I think that the people would understand that incident." *[laughter]*

Sa dormitoryo, ako pati siya ka-roommate. Si Dulay, 'yung taga-Baguio, Ilocano. Pati si Bebot Bello, Ilocano rin, Isabela. Kami 'yung magbabarkada. So hindi 'yan dito mga masteral, mga AIM... Aim high, hit low. *[laughter]*

Oo, puro lang 'yan dormitoryo pero may integrity. Lalo na 'yan si Dulay. Kasi kami noon 'pag maubusan ng allowance, nagnanakaw kami ng mga canteen diyan sa... *[laughter]*

'Yan si Dulay na 'yan, ano talaga... "Huwag mo akong isali diyan." Kasi ang ginawa... Kaya ayaw ko ng sugal. Kita mo lahat ng sugal pinasara ko. Kasi kami pagdating ng allowance, p\*\*\*\*\* i\*\* tutuloy kami doon sa jai alai. In one night, ubos 'yung aming --- *[laughter]* ubos 'yung aming allowance and for the rest of the month. Utang pati 'yung tubig sa --- 'yung...

Kagaya nung ano ko --- sabi ko... I fired 'yung government corporate counsel for agreeing and expanding gambling in Luzon... Ayaw ko kasi galing ako diyan eh. So mabuti't na lang.

Pero huwag mo naman 'yung kastiguhin 'yung anak ninyo. Meron talagang late bloomer. O minsan, they never really bloom. *[laughter]*

But the only single solitary human being that kept her faith in me is my mother.

I'm sad that hindi niya ako inabutan maging presidente. They'd lost hope in me. Sabi ng tatay ko, namatay na 'yung... Ang dala-dalang baon niya na ako...

'Pag sinabi hanggang pantalan ka, that's a Visayan cliché. Hanggang diyan ka lang tiga-karga ng sako.

Tapos sabi ko, 'yan ang abutan ko. Ang nanay ko na lang ang... So the... a mother's love is really... Hanggang ngayon hindi naka-recover ng kamatayan.

Kung kastiguhin ako noon. Eh kung buhay lang 'yun, nanay ko, si Soling. Ah demandado 'yun, child abuse. *[laughter]* P\*\*\*\*...

Almost thrice a week, naka-ganun ako diyan sa altar. *[laughter]* Titingin... Si Hesu Kristo noon. Ewan ko kung totoo ha. Punta kayo ng Davao. Dalhin ko sa bahay niyo. Naka-ganun 'yung... "Father, forgive them, for they do not..."

Ngayon magpunta ako. It's an old house. Medyo dilapidated na. Si Kristo naka-ganun na. *[laughter]* Ako taas pa rin ang noo ko.

Sabi ko, nung una, sabi ko, "Lord pareho gyud tayo ng... pareho gyud tayo ng swerte sa buhay. Ano kayang ginawa mong y\*\*\* ka bakit dalawa tayong nagharapan dito?" *[laughter]* Totoo.

Minsan, ang nanay ko kumakastigo 'yun. Anak ng... Maski anong mahawakan noon. May pampalo 'yan siya ng --- 'yung sa... tartanilla. Oo, tartanilla. Ganun na lang gud kaiksi 'yun ngayon. Tinago talaga ng mga kapatid ko para "exhibit A." Gumanun lang. Ubos 'yun sa katawan ko.

'Pag humampas 'yun, sabihin ng tatay ko, "Tama na, tama na, tama na." Sige hampas. Sige pa rin hampas. "Tama na!" sabi ng tatay ko. "Tama na!"

Tapos hindi man maghinto. Sabi ko, "Ma, maniwala ka kay papa. Sabi niya, tama na. Tama na diyan." *[laughter]* Lalo hindi maghinto.

"Anong klaseng babae ito?" "Sabi ng papa ko, tama na. Tama na, ma. Maniwala ka kay papa." At now --- every now and then I go to the tomb and thank her for... Sinabi ko, "Ma, tingnan mo. 'Di ba sinabi ko sa'yo noon? 45 lang dahan-dahan. Aabot ka rin. Tingnan mo. Tugade, valedictorian. Lorenzana, PMA, valedictorian na sila lahat. Tingnan mo saan sila umabot. Ayan utusan ko ang mga g\*\*\*. *[laughter and applause]*

Tama na. P\*\*\*\*\* i\*\*. Baka marinig tayo doon. *[laughter]*

Maraming salamat po. I think I have...

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