

**REMARKS OF  
SECRETARY ENRIQUE A. MANALO  
AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION RECEPTION  
OF THE COLOMBO PLAN STAFF COLLEGE (CPSC)**

*Theme: Navigating the Future of TVET: Empowering Generations for Sustainable  
Progress over 50 Years*

04 December 2023, Dusit Thani Manila, Makati City

Director General Dr. Ganemulle,  
Governing Board Chairperson Ambassador Betty Palaso of Papua New Guinea,  
Secretary Suharto T. Mangudadatu, technical Education and Skills Development  
Authority (TESDA),  
Members of the CPSC Governing Board,  
Excellencies and CPSC member countries,  
Members of the diplomatic corps,  
Partners from the education and development sectors, the business community, and  
the media,  
Distinguished guests and colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

Let me first warmly congratulate the Colombo Plan Staff College on its golden 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I am grateful for your kind invitation and I am honored to commemorate this milestone with all of you.

I am also glad that employees of the CPSC and former Directors-General are being recognized at this evening's event for their outstanding service.

As the host of the CPSC since 1987, the Philippines is proud of the successes the organization has achieved since its inception. CPSC's transfer from Singapore to Manila in the late 1980s enhanced the Philippines' role as host to international organizations.

The Philippines is a staunch supporter of multilateralism and regional amity and cooperation. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has emphasized that only by working closely together in genuine partnership can we build a region and world that we want. We promote the President's vision for an inclusive and effective multilateralism through all our engagements with our valuable partners and friends.

The CPSC is one of the foremost examples of how the Philippines supports multilateral collaboration for collective action and common purpose. In the Asia-Pacific, which has become an engine of the world economy and whose economies generally continue to enjoy high growth rates, our countries must cooperate more closely together so that our peoples develop equitably and sustainably, which we believe is the main ingredient for a more peaceful and stable region.

In this regard, the CPSC is a testament of our country's deep commitment to South-South and triangular Cooperation and promoting international engagement towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. This fully complements and supports the objective of the Colombo Plan to be a cooperative mechanism for the economic and social advancement of the peoples of South and Southeast Asia.

Over the past half-century, CPSC has played an important role in advancing human resource development by improving the delivery of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Asia-Pacific region. Through the provision of capacity-building, vocational education and training providers, CPSC has significantly contributed to the development of human capital in its member countries.

From publishing its first TVET book in 1983, to transitioning to digital training modalities through its Web Teaching and Learning Systems as early as 2004, CPSC has demonstrated its capacity to innovate and adapt to the times. I also want to highlight the establishment of the Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission, which is the premier accreditation and certification commission for TVET institutions in the region.

In fact, as one of the leading sources of professional migrant workers globally, the Philippines has significantly benefited from the work of the Staff College. We thus commend and appreciate the CPSC's focus on people-centered upskilling and development.

CPSC has recently launched training programs on 21st-century skills development. This emphasis on critical thinking, creativity and innovation, technological literacy, global awareness, and lifelong learning is important because these skills allow our citizens to effectively respond to and navigate emerging and complex global challenges.

Indeed, the value of technical education is its practicability – particularly in equipping the youth with in-demand and up-to-date skills that allow them to participate in national and global economies as dynamic individuals with agency. This redounds to benefits for different economic sectors since technical education helps address skills gaps in job markets.

We also acknowledge the important contribution of CPSC in the achievement of robust economic growth and sustainable development. At the heart of the Staff College's mission is the recognition that education is a powerful catalyst for promoting peace and addressing challenges such as poverty and socio-economic inequality. I commend CPSC for fostering a mindset of lifelong learning, which leads to more resilient and agile individuals and societies.

2023 marks the first year of the implementation of the CPSC Strategic Plan 2023-2028. This will be the blueprint for activities of the Staff College for the next five years. We look forward to supporting initiatives on greening skills, and skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and renewable energy systems, among others.

Looking ahead, my hope is that the CPSC will continue to make responsive and quality TVET programs accessible to more people in our countries.

As the Philippines takes on the role of Chair of the Governing Board for the fiscal year 2024-2025, we reiterate our strong support for the work of CPSC. We will continue to partner closely with members and the Secretariat to achieve a more developed and skilled Asia-Pacific community.

Once again, congratulations to CPSC on your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Thank you and *Mabuhay!*