

11th Global RCE Conference: Education for the Sustainable Development Goals
7-9 December, 2018, Cebu, the Philippines



Plenary I

Video message from Hon. Leni Robredo, Vice-President, Republic of the Philippines
Welcome and Keynote speech: 'Role of Multi-stakeholder Partnerships in the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals' (Hon. Tomas Osmeña, Mayor, Cebu City)

7 December, 2018, Cebu, the Philippines

Presenters: Hon. Leni Robredo (Vice-President, Republic of the Philippines) and Hon. Tomas Osmeña (Mayor, Cebu City)

The Vice-President of the Republic of the Philippines, Hon. Leni Robredo, spoke via a video message. She welcomed all participants and noted that the conference comes at an important time, one in which the world is suffering from the deficit of knowledge and empathy, with many complex problems yet to be solved including hunger and poverty. She mentioned that the latest SDG report shows that despite recent successes, malnutrition, lack of access to education, and climate change continue to delay progress. However one thing that is important as we tackle these issues is education, thus it is time to strengthen this. She ended her message noting it is fortunate that this is being looked at at the local level.

This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Francisco 'Bimbo' Fernandez on behalf of the Mayor of Cebu City, the Hon. Tomas Osmeña, who proceeded to welcome everyone and expressed his wishes for a fruitful conference. He began by asking the audience to reflect on the notion of 'making today better than yesterday'; noting that 'tomorrow must be better than today, for all and not just for a few'. He spoke about methods of support and the need to promote economic development, to ensure that any economic development is inclusive, and that it promotes participation. In terms of SDGs 8 and 9, their work covers business promotion and supporting investors, trying to make it easier for them to do business. They have a target to issue business permits for new businesses and renewal for 90% of the 30,000 businesses registered.

Mr. Fernandez also spoke about the informal sector including rural areas. Cebu is highly urbanised, but only 20% of the land is occupied by 80% of the people. Vending in the street is illegal, however they try to tolerate it if there are no complaints and syndicates that exploit street vendors, because this is the livelihood of 5,000 families. In terms of tax collection, they try to be very strict – in 2018 they committed to improving the tax system by making it progressive. It currently is very regressive, as a way of supporting small businesses and the informal sector. Employment, job placements, training, and social protection is provided. He went on to mention that Cebu City is the only city in the

Philippines which gives an allowance to senior citizens, at 1,000 pesos per month, which is not solely financial, but about respect.

In terms of SDG 2, their work includes supporting NGOs that have food programmes, whilst for SDG 3, they are trying to solve affordability and forgetfulness, with health workers tasked with helping to ensure people take their medication. In terms of climate change goals, they are focused on vast rapid transport – looking at the first mass transport system in Cebu. This has caused a lot of controversy, and discriminates against cars, as there would be special lanes for buses. Currently cars get priority, but this is unfair, as 20% of the population have cars, but own 80% of the roads, whilst everyone else is in uncomfortable jeepneys and buses. Also related to climate change, the city is continuing to experience a lot of flooding. However he noted that when trying to improve the waterways, people end up being dislocated – climate change policies should not lead to the dislocation of people.

After sharing many of their activities arranged within the framework of the SDGs and indicators, Mr. Fernandez noted that they do not have a scorecard that concretely measures performance, or how much more still needs to be done, however a project they are currently working on will soon allow them to have a grasp of this data. On behalf of the Mayor, he thanked the audience for providing them with the chance to reflect on what they have done and what they still need to do, concluding by renewing their commitment that tomorrow has to be better than today, and not just for a few but for all.