



STATEMENTS 2011

Opening Address at the Dedication of the ILO-Silliman University Knowledge Corner and Signing of the Memorandum of Agreement

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- Dr Ben Malayang III, President, Silliman University
- Dr Betsy Joy Tan, Vice-President, Silliman University
- University officials, faculty and staff
- Students, ladies and gentlemen, *maayong buntag* (good morning)!

Thank you for the warm welcome! This is the first time for me to visit Dumaguete, which I heard is also called the island of gentle people. It is a pleasure and honour for the ILO to partner with Silliman University, one of the biggest universities in Asia.

Information and knowledge sharing is not only vital to the ILO but it is also a critical component of our global, regional and national mandates. With the ILO's wide range of researches, operational and policy tools, statistics labour market information and analysis, as well as publications, we are always willing and eager to reach out to students and academics.

It is our hope that through the ILO Knowledge Corner, we can enlighten and inspire teachers and students and most importantly enhance their understanding of the world of work.

There are students, and believe it or not professors, and even national policy makers throughout the world, who often lack understanding of some of the basic concept associated with the world of work.

As an example, who among you here can tell me the definition of unemployment? Remember, there is an international convention that countries have signed that defined some of the most basic concepts including the definition of employment and unemployment.

Often these concepts are not brought to the forefront even in basic economic, political or social science course as many take them as given.

The question we must ask ourselves is, if you don't understand the concepts, how can you be expected to understand what policies are required to address issues such as economic growth, poverty or social protection.

In short, unemployment is often an issue more associated with advanced economics where social protection systems, including unemployment insurance systems are in place.

In most middle- and lower income countries people can simply not afford to be unemployed if they lose their wage and salary position.

They often join the ranks of the vulnerably employed. They are left with little choice but to accept or create whatever work is available just so they and their loved ones can survive another day.

Remember, if you have a high rate of unemployment then the objective is to get people back to work but if you have a high vulnerable rate of employment then the issue of concern is how to transform or create employment that is both decent and productive.

In this light, unemployment at the global level is just the tip of the iceberg. Here in the Philippines, about 2.9 million Filipinos were unemployed in 2010. Vulnerable employment at 42 per cent of those employed in the Philippines or more than 15 million is often of greater concern. Later today I hope we can openly discuss the issue in detail.

Labour market information and analysis are essential if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and fulfil the commitments of the Philippine Development Plan and the Philippine Jobs Pact.

One other element that we bring to the knowledge corner besides our research materials is the talents and knowledge of our programme and project officials. Our plan is that they will visit the knowledge corner to conduct lectures and learning sessions, and provide personal insights and advice to students and faculty.

The Silliman University is the first ILO Knowledge Corner in the Visayas. My colleague, the late Sol Ebarle, Jr., an alumnus of this university worked hard to make this partnership possible. Sol proposed and initiated the establishment of the ILO Knowledge Corner with the Silliman University. For many years, Sol has been part of the ILO team working to put an end to child labour in the Philippines.

Given his generous contribution to the ILO and the country of the Philippines, I would kindly request that you join me in a moment of silence to pray for him as we acknowledge what he has done for his Alma Mater, hometown, the country and the international community.

Today's signing of the Memorandum of Agreement, including the learning session this afternoon, marks the beginning of ILO's partnership with Silliman University.

We hope to further strengthen this partnership. As such and as the ILO Country Director, the ILO is ready to support Silliman University, to broaden understanding of the world of work, to deepen appreciation and to help promote decent and productive work for all!

Daghang salamat (Thank you very much)!