

Ms. Mucha-Shim Quiling Arquiza - Secretary-General, Qalam, Asian Muslim Action Muslim Network in the Philippines (AMANPHIL) – Philippines

Thank you very much Miss Chairman.

I am speaking in this Forum on behalf of the organisations Asian Muslim Action Muslim Network in the Philippines, and Indigenous Luma and Moro Alliance for Appropriate and Liberating Education – a civil society organisations who have been very active in championing the works on alternative learning systems and we can humbly claim that our initiatives have set the frameworks and contributed significantly to the transformation to the Philippine department of education bureau of non-formal education to become the bureau of alternative learning systems.

The bureau of alternative learning systems has been tasked to specially to oversee the implementation of so-called mainstreaming or integration into the public school system of the Madaris or Muslims schools for the Baucama auma autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao. First, let me give a very brief suggestions as a Muslim on the definition of education.

Education is not only [a service] but it is a human right towards a fuller and more inclusive definition of education, I urge this body to incorporate faith commuinties in regards to the concept of education.

Among Muslims education is an obligation as we belive in life-long leanring is every persons goal. Seeking knowledge from cradle to grave is Islamic prophetic injunction. Many folk religious traditions had also seen in education a way towards oneness without divine crator. In this sense education is not only decided for its personal benefits fulfilling individual potential but it is obligatory for every religious person to support educational pursuits as a form of spiritual duty education then is not only a human right benefocoal for this life time but is a moral and spiritual duty that prepares us for eternal life. Hence education should not be regarded as merely a social and economic basis for physical existence but more importantly it should be taken in the light of being ethical and spiritual issues defining peoples humanness and essential for the full realisation for human dignity.

Let me go back to my observation of the core principle of education measures benefiting indigenous peoples that stem from the right to self-determination and link this to the current initiative with the Philippine government to integrate minority education such as the Muslim Madaris into the mainstream public school system. I argue that the core principle is true and relevant only as far as it is implementation schemes are in place and followed fitfully.

Hence, we agree that states should make conditions enabling institutions which are representative of minority to participate meaningfully in development and implementation of policies and programs.

Thank you very much.