

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE KABALIKAT SA PAGTUTURO
ACT**

[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace | 03 June 2024]

Thank you very much to the Executive Secretary for his introduction. *[Please take your seat.]*

Senate President Chiz Escudero and the members of the Senate who are with us this afternoon; House Speaker Martin Romualdez, and many members of the House of Representatives who are here with us this afternoon; [laughter] members of the Cabinet; the officials and staff from the Department of Education; the partners from our --- from the private sector who have played --- who will play an important part in this --- in the implementation of this new law; and my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen; good afternoon.

We mark today a significant milestone for Philippine education as we have signed the Kabalikatan sa Pagtuturo Act.

Since the start of my term, I have placed great emphasis on the need to bolster our educational system and the urgency with which this should be done.

As an oft mentioned adage of our elders, to which as a father, I too also subscribe, education is the only inheritance that we can leave our children that can never be taken away from them.

Our Vice President and Secretary of Education and the women and men of the Department of Education have laid down the building blocks of a modern and responsive educational system.

Through the MATATAG Agenda, we are addressing the challenges to basic education.

We are decongesting the basic education curriculum, with a focus on foundational skills such as numeracy and literacy.

We're building more classrooms and providing learning materials and internet connections, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

We pursue the school-based feeding program, fostering safe spaces for learning, and implementing other programs aimed at supporting learners' welfare.

Today, thanks to the hard work of our legislators, we get to receive the much-needed assistance for the MATATAG Agenda --- the fourth component of that -- that is to give support to teachers so they can concentrate on teaching.

I think we are all familiar with the situation where --- when a teacher finds themselves in financial straits then sometimes, they are distracted and spend their time trying to increase the support that they can provide their families, and to the detriment of the actual teaching.

But teachers teach because it's a vocation. It is not a job, it is a vocation. Teachers teach because they feel they have to teach and they want to teach.

And that's why we must give them the support so that they are allowed to do precisely that.

The Kabalikat sa Pagtuturo Act comes as a welcome support to the advancement of the MATATAG Agenda.

Teachers are the unsung heroes of our society --- of any society for that matter. They toil and burn the midnight oil, they teach our children not for money nor for prestige.

They serve our country each day by teaching our children the basic foundations to make them responsible and productive citizens.

It is our responsibility as a government and as a society to take care of them.

Indeed, this new law institutionalizes the provision of an annual teaching allowance and gradually increases it from the current five thousand pesos to ten thousand pesos, which will not be subjected to income tax.

And while it might seem inconsequential to those who are already used to having a steady supply of basic materials for work, this amount makes an enormous difference for our beloved teachers and for the students.

For decades, they have willingly taken on the burden of having to spend their own money on classroom supplies to aid them in teaching.

They embrace this wholeheartedly as their responsibility; as part of their duty as teachers; as part of their vocation.

It must take an incredible amount of love to sacrifice what little you have for the sake of your students despite having financial worries of your own.

With the passage of this law, we are easing some of the burden that you carry each day.

So, at this point, I would like to convey my gratitude to our colleagues in the House of Representatives and of the Senate for pursuing this long-overdue increase.

We have listened, we have persevered, and now we have taken action.

However, there is much still that needs to be done to strengthen our educational system, promote social welfare, and to secure our nation, and move our development forward. In all of these aspects, we need to work hand in hand.

And I believe Congress has done significantly well in passing key pieces of legislation that support our national development agenda.

I am happy to report that we launched the Sukat ng Kalikasan or SnK framework and toolkit of the DENR last May 22 during the International Day for Biological Diversity.

It is the start of the implementation of *[the]* Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System Law, or simply PENCAS law, which I signed on the same day.

This is essential to achieve a balance between economic planning and environmental protection.

The SnK framework is a tool for the effective management of our natural resources that is grounded on science and sufficient forward planning. It will serve as a guide amidst climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy transition, and other natural phenomena that are beyond our control.

So, thank Congress for its passage of the Eddie Garcia Law as well, which was signed last May 24. *[applause]*

This puts in place measures to protect [the] workers of the movie and television industry—an industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people and generates billions of income annually.

It mandates movie and television employers to ensure safe and humane working conditions, provide benefits and services for their workers' security and well-being, and to adhere to a strict set of standards that are in accordance with the Labor Code.

So, with these, I implore our fellow workers in both houses of Congress: Let's continue working together to make a difference in our people's lives. Let us continue to write and pass these laws based on foresight, not on reaction. Continue building the foundations of a Bagong Pilipinas – a nation where people's needs are attended to so that they can focus on doing what is best for themselves, and their families, and for their communities, and thereby for their country.

To our teachers, our students, and the Filipino people, rest assured that this is just the beginning of all that we wish to accomplish for you and for our country.

We are constantly looking for and finding solutions to the decades-old problems of our society now and not just mindlessly flinging the burdens of the present administration to the next administration or to the next generation.

To my fellow workers in the Executive Branch, this I ask, let us act now and let us act quickly so we can build a society that we can proudly bequeath to our children and to our people.

Let us take this chance, and continue delivering the best for a brighter tomorrow for all.

Mabuhay ang ating mga magigiting na guro! *[applause]* Mabuhay ang ating mga manggagawa sa industriya ng pelikula at telebisyon! *[applause]* Mabuhay ang ating kalikasan! *[applause]* Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]* Maraming salamat at magandang hapon sa inyo. *[applause]*

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