



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

CEDF-IT SIXTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
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Ballroom 1, Cebu City Sports Club, Cebu City

Keynote Address
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Chairman, Commission on Information and Communications Technology

Distinguished officers and members of the Cebu Educational Development Foundation for Information Technology, or CEDF-IT, led by its President Engr. Jose Mari Bigornia and Executive Director Mr. Bonifacio Belen, special guest Mr. Redhuan Oon, open source leader and evangelist, representatives from other regional ICT councils, fellow government workers, guests, ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant good evening to you all!

I am deeply honored to have been invited to deliver the Keynote Address at CEDF-IT's 6th Anniversary Celebration. CEDF-IT, a consortium of industry players, academic institutions, government agencies and NGOs, aims to provide human resource development initiatives in order to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of the local ICT workforce. The Commission on ICT commends CEDF-IT's efforts to help bridge the skills gap by developing standards that uplift the competencies of Filipino ICT professionals and make them more globally competitive.

CEDF-IT's vision reads "to help transform Cebu into a major ICT hub in the country through proactive intervention in the ICT Human Resource sector; and, to serve as catalyst to responsive academe-industry-government-NGO linkage." I am pleased to say that these statements are aligned with the major objectives of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, or MTPDP, for 2004-2010 and the Philippine ICT Roadmap.

Since its formation in 2001, CEDF-IT has worked on several flagship programs namely: IT Teachers Academy, Professional Certification and Training Center, HR Survey and Monitoring, R&D Institutionalization Unit, Quality Assurance in IT Education, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub and Cebu as a Global IT Education Hub. These projects are geared towards objectives that are also concurrently pursued by the Philippine government and the CICT.

The IT Teachers Academy, established in 2002, serves as CEDF-IT's training ground for teachers to enhance and upgrade their ICT competencies and pass on their skills to their students. The IT Teachers Academy is envisioned to become a venue, channel and impetus for industry players and academic institutions to design a curriculum that is responsive to the demands of the industry and is uniformly adopted by all member schools. CEDF-IT's efforts in Cebu are very promising as the city has become a viable source of competent ICT workers for outsourcing firms, even in other cities.

Another noteworthy accomplishment of CEDF-IT is the conduct of a comprehensive Human Resource Survey on ICT Services in 2002. This undertaking produced an in-depth understanding of Cebu's ICT human resource supply, the results of which contributed to the formulation of a Cebu-specific profile that reflects industry trends in relation to existing local capacities, gaps between industry demand and talent supply, and specific directions to bridge the gaps identified. This initiative is consistent with the MTPDP's plan for a regular administration of an ICT manpower skills survey and tracking system that will provide accurate data on the status of ICT skills in the country. CEDF-IT's success in conceptualizing and facilitating an original Cebu-based ICT human resource survey may serve as a basis for other skills surveys at the national level.

On our part, the CICT, through our Human Capital Development Group, helps ensure the availability of ICT-competent manpower by promoting computer literacy in high school students through our Internet in Schools, or iSchools, project. This project provides public high schools with PC labs equipped with broadband connectivity, enabling teachers and students to access relevant digital content and applications. The iSchools project endeavors to create a larger pool of ICT-enabled high school graduates, who can pursue ICT-focused higher education, secure ICT-related employment, and partake in growth opportunities in the ICT sector.

In addition, the CICT implements certification programs to help maintain the favorable position that the Filipino ICT workforce holds in the global ICT market. The National ICT Competency Standards, or NICS, test assesses an individual's ICT-related knowledge and skills in relation to given levels of proficiency. The International Computer Driving License, or ICDL, allows individuals to evaluate their competency level in the use of PCs. Finally, the IT Proficiency Exam measures an individual's technical skills in areas such as programming and systems analysis and design.

I would also like to give special mention to CEDF-IT's Professional Certification Center, which offers government-recognized professional competency certifications, such as the Philippine IT General Certification Examination, or Phil-IT GCE, that comply with global standards. These

certification exams enable CEDF-IT to verify the competency levels of IT professionals in different areas of the ICT services industry.

The CICT believes that strong partnerships among industry players, educators, government and NGOs, are vital to optimizing the opportunities brought about by responsible use of ICT. It is for this reason that we commend CEDF-IT's leadership in bringing together these separate parties to establish a common direction and strategy. In fact, we at the CICT have encouraged the formation of ICT Councils following the CEDF-IT model. We appreciate the efforts of CEDF-IT, particularly of its Executive Director Boni Belen, in the organization of various ICT Councils within the Cyber Corridor. CEDF-IT has been instrumental in setting up the Iloilo Federation for IT, or IFIT, and more recently, Boni, along with my colleague Commissioner Mon Ibrahim, was in Bacolod to help institutionalize the Bacolod-Negros Oriental Educational Foundation for IT, or BNEFIT. Equally important, CEDF-IT graciously hosted earlier this afternoon the organizational meeting of the established ICT Councils within the country. We hope that more and more will be evangelized by the CEDF-IT model, and earn for their regions the same success that CEDF-IT has achieved for Cebu.

Before I close, I would like to comment that this year's theme, *"Revisiting the CEDF-IT Vision – Gains and Tasks for the Mid-term,"* is very appropriate. The ICT landscape is filled with uncertainty and characterized by abrupt changes. We therefore need to be dynamic in our approach to enhancing the quality of our ICT manpower and advocating for ICT as a potent tool for nation building. Given its impressive accomplishments, it may be timely for CEDF-IT to review its mandate and revisit its strategies in order to build on its successes or address any existing gaps.

On behalf of the Commission on ICT, I would like to congratulate CEDF-IT for its remarkable contributions to our national goal of uplifting the competency of the Filipino ICT workforce towards achieving greater global competitiveness.

Happy 6th year anniversary and I wish you many more productive years to come.

Thank you very much!