

Graduation Speech:
Resilience and Innovation in Transcending the New Normal at
the time of Covid-19 Global Pandemic

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Alhamdulillah Rabbil ‘Alamin Wassalatu Wassalamu ‘Ala-
Asyarafil Anbiya’e Wal Mursalin Saidina Muhammadin Wa’ala
Alihi Wasahbihi Ajma’in

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

(May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)

And a very Good Morning to All

Topic:
Resilience and Innovation in Transcending the New Normal at
the time of Covid-19 Global Pandemic

Dear Moderator

RC-AKIC President, Prof. Dr. Camar Umpa, RC-AKIC Vice President, Prof. Omar Khalid, College Dean Prof. Benaning Omaca-an, Members of the Board of Trustees, School Officials, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

Alhamdulillah, first and foremost, I would like to thank Allah SWT for giving me this wonderful opportunity to be with you in this auspicious graduation ceremony. I feel honoured when I was approached by the organizing committee to present some of my thoughts via this video presentation. It would have been more interesting, if I can be there physically to feel the ambiance of the occasion. Sad to say, this was not possible due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. Nevertheless, I take great pleasure in congratulating the graduating students.

Dear Students,

Alhamdulillah, today is a remarkable day that signifies a new milestone in your educational endeavor. I believe the hard work, time, energy and pain you have taken to complete this program

will be duly recognized by the institutions you will be working with in the future. Today, as new graduates you have all the rights to feel proud of your great achievement. Equally happy to see you graduate will be your Principal, lecturers and parents. To me, as young graduates you are the hope, future, and the next echelon of leaders in this region, in the Philippines and the Muslim world at large. May Allah bless you, ameen!

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

Kindly, allow me to state here that the core of my presentation today will be focused on the resilience and innovation of the human mind, heart and soul in transcending the New Normal, in the wake of Covid-19. At this juncture of my presentation, with all humbleness I call upon myself and the rest of you on how to stay focused and come out triumphant during these trying times as Allah's vicegerent on earth. I guess, you must be aware of the new realities in the country and elsewhere in the world in facing the pandemic. As young graduates, you have to use your Allah given intelligence and mental strength to survive the situation and not to give up the fight in overcoming all obstacles in life be they health, money, job opportunity, human relationship, etc.

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

These are days in the world that we hear great number of people die due to the pandemic, loss of jobs & employment, families in crisis due to economic reason, people finding difficulties in paying loans borrowed from the banks, etc. I believe such things not only happen in our beloved country but globally as well. As Muslims, we should not lose faith in the teachings of the Qur'an and should remain fortified in your Iman and find resilience in our souls. In facing trials and tribulations in life, we have to ponder over on what Allah has mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

“We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits (earnings); but give glad tidings to the persevering and patient.” (Al-Baqarah: 155)

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

The ayah (verse) that I have quoted is just one of the many verses we find in the Qur'an in which Allah reminds us to have the qualities of patience, perseverance and persistence in facing difficult times in our lives. In our situation in this region, for very long we have faced poverty, violence, war and now the onslaught of Covid-19. As someone belonging to the older generation, with all humility I call upon the young minds of today to think "outside the box" and at the same time to be creative and innovative in coming up with new and vibrant ideas to survive and sustain life in an ever-changing world. At times, we have to go beyond our bookish knowledge and search deeper into our hearts and mind to bring out new and innovative ideas to bring life to our region.

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

In facing the new challenges of life, let us not feel disheartened to see the ravage of war that has ruined our beloved region. Looking at how Japan and Germany were able to rebuild their respective countries after a devastating defeat in the World War Two, I believe, we too can rebuild our region and bring back the lost glory and cheers in our faces. As a researcher interested in conflict and crisis management, I personally feel that the impetus for reviving this region can only come with peace, co-existence, good education, restoration of infrastructures and the

creation of a vibrant business enterprise all throughout the region. Dear Students, in our effort to achieve these lofty ideas and ideals, you have a greater role to play. Insha Allah, I hope you would be able to deliver the expectation and Amanah that are put on your shoulders. May Allah be with you, ameen!

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

In our enthusiasm in the forward march towards a better life for all of us, let us not forget our core-values as Muslims, our families and friends. We are nobody without their support. As such, we should not forget them during our good times and bad. Besides, our families and friends, let us not forget God (Allah SWT) as our Lord and Sustainer. We are told in the Qur'an that the more we are grateful to Him, the more we will be blessed in this life and in the hereafter (Surah Ibrahim: verse 7).

Dear Principal, Lecturers, Students and Parents,

Before I end this short message, allow me once more again to thank the Honorable Principal and Lecturers for giving me this opportunity to deliver my talk. Also, I would like to thank the students and others for listening diligently. For the graduating students, I wish you all the best in your new undertakings. Lastly, May Allah bless us all. Wassalam.