

Welcome Remarks
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Good morning to everyone. It is truly wonderful to see the PNHRS in full force today.

Last year, the President, Her Excellence Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, issued Proclamation Number 1309 which recognize and declare that every second week of August be called the Philippine National Health Research System Week. True enough, this is testimony to the executive's recognition of the PNHRS as a system that is vital to national development.

Based on that proclamation she enjoined the four core agencies of government namely the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Health, the Commission for Higher Education and the National Institutes of Health to use all of their available resources in order to promote health research in the country, and produce an enabling environment for health research.

We were indeed very happy that this proclamation order was issued because at the same time we were actually moving heaven and earth for the passage of the Philippine National Health Research System Act of which we are still working very hard for its passage, which hopefully you would have the time to pay a visit in the booth outside.

This Bill will actually institutionalize the Philippine National Health Research System which was already functionally in existence since 2003. But more importantly it will create the Philippine National Health Research Fund which hopefully will address the myriad problems in health that we are facing now through the formulation and development of relevant and timely health research.

I am truly honored and pleased to see everyone of you here because you are in fact the most important and vital component of the System. Without the Regional Health Research Development Committees, which we were able to establish across the country, the PNHRS would not be what it is now.

Before I assumed we have at the Council, we had six Regional Health Research Development Committees, including one in the National Capital Region, in Regions 1, 6, 7, 8 and 11. Now we have actually traversed the whole country from north to south including, and I'm always proud to say, including the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao.

I was informed no less by the DOST Secretary and the DOH Secretary in ARMM that we are the only sector represented in ARMM. Among all the peace concerns of ARMM, we took that first step to make sure that our brothers in ARMM would actually be trained and capacitated in health research because we do believe that the best people who can produce relevant research are the people who come from the region.

One of the objectives of the System really, is capacity building.

Of course we also work on the five other priority areas which we think are needed in order to further strengthen the Philippine National Health Research System, namely: research management, ethics, structure/organization monitoring evaluation, research utilization, and resource mobilization.

I hope that the whole two days, which started yesterday, proved to be productive for all of you. We were indeed overwhelmed by the number of people who attended the three parallel sessions yesterday, which I think helped make us move a little closer to capacitating our researchers to do brilliant and recognizable work in health research.

We also would like to say that for today's activities we have lined up very interesting topics that I think will further stimulate you to pursue more work on health research.

We are also happy to have with us our leading supporters for health research in the country, which I hope we'll have time to interact with as we progress during the day. Because it is only through interaction with our peers and through mutual support that we'll be able to achieve our objectives.

So again, in behalf of the Philippine National Health Research System of which we are all a part of, we hope that through these activities we'll continue on to work despite all odds, despite the limited resources, which hopefully will be addressed in the very near future. We'll be able to be productive to produce relevant health research that will really impact and benefit the majority of the Filipino people.

So again, *maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat* [thank you very much to all of you].

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