

**Speech by H.E. Chulamanee Chartsuwan, Secretary-General of the Colombo Plan at
International Conference – Future Ready TVT Programme
On 3rd July 2026 at 09:00am
Hilton Hotel, Colombo**

Prof. (Dr.) Suresh Kumar Dhameja
Director General, Colombo Plan Staff College
Outgoing Secretary-General of the Colombo Plan, Dr. Benjamin P. Reyes
Representatives of member countries,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is a great honour and a deeply meaningful moment for me to address you today at this International Conference on *Future-Ready TVET and Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific*.

This occasion holds special significance not only because it forms part of the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Colombo Plan, but also because it marks my first official engagement as Secretary-General. While I was not part of the discussions over the past few days, I feel truly privileged to stand before a distinguished gathering of senior- and mid-level government officials and institutional leaders, professors, and technical specialists.

Over the course of this programme, you have engaged in important conversations—sharing experiences, exploring innovative approaches, and reflecting on the evolving role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. I commend each of you for your active participation and your commitment to strengthening TVET systems in your respective countries.

Today, we find ourselves at a defining moment. The Asia-Pacific region is facing rapid technological transformation, shifting labour markets, and increasing demands for sustainability and inclusivity. In this context, the role of TVET is more critical than ever. It is no longer sufficient to equip learners with technical skills alone; we must prepare individuals to adapt, to innovate, and to contribute meaningfully to society.

A future ready TVET system is one that embraces change. It integrates digital transformation, promotes green and sustainable skills, and ensures quality and relevance in training. It is also one that strengthens regional cooperation—because the challenges we face are shared, and our solutions must be collaborative.

As we reflect on the discussions of the past few days, I sincerely hope that each of you has gained not only knowledge, but also inspiration. I encourage you to take these insights back—to your countries, to your institutions, and to your workplaces—and to translate them into tangible action. The true success of this programme will be measured not by what was said here, but by what is implemented beyond this conference.

The Colombo Plan has, for 75 years, stood as a symbol of partnership, mutual support, and shared progress. As I begin my tenure as Secretary-General, I am committed to strengthening these values—supporting our member countries in building resilient, inclusive, and future-ready TVET systems, and fostering deeper regional cooperation across Asia and the Pacific.

Let me conclude by commending the Colombo Plan Staff College for organizing this timely and impactful conference. Your efforts are contributing not only to dialogue, but to meaningful change.

I thank you for your dedication and your vision, and I look forward to working together with all of you to build a stronger and more future-ready region.

Thank you.