

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd promotes cultural and artistic heritage

Education Secretary Armin Luistro has called on young students to work towards awareness, appreciation, preservation and promotion of the nation's cultural and artistic heritage through the 3rd Sining Pambansa Festival which opens in Davao City today.

The festival is part of the thrust of the Department of Education (DepEd) to strengthen Filipino cultural and artistic traditions. Corollary to this, DepEd has initiated the creation of schools with Special Program in the Arts (SPA). At present, DepEd has 17 pilot SPA schools offering different art disciplines.

DepEd has also created a special committee on culture and the arts through the Culture and the Arts Office (CAO) to focus on having an integrated culture and arts program in line with its Education For All agenda.

"As a nation, what we lack in material wealth, we compensate with a surfeit of artistic and creative talents. *Walang duda, ang mga Pilipino ang isang lahi na biniyayaan na magkaroon ng napakaraming magagaling na mamamayan pagdating sa larangan ng sining,*" said Luistro. (There is no doubt that the Filipino is a race gifted with talented people in the field of art.)

The Philippines has produced and continue to develop world-renowned talents who excel in various art forms – ballet, opera, individual or group singing, visual arts, film-making, acting and writing, among other disciplines.

According to Luistro, the Filipino's deep sense of artistry and expression seems like second nature. "At a drop of a pin, we break into a song. At a beat of a drum, we swing in cadence with the tune and it comes as no surprise because Filipinos are naturally lovers of the music and the arts. *Sa totoo lang, mas nagtataka tayo kung ang isang Pinoy ay hindi marunong kumanta o sumayaw man lang,*" Luistro stressed. (In truth, we will be surprised if a Filipino does not know how to sing or even dance.)

The country has more than 7,100 islands, every island having its own set of talents.

Luistro advises the students that "it would do well for the cause of national unity if the Philippines can develop through music and the arts a sense of national identity that will further unite our people."

He added that there is a need to channel all these energy into something more positive so that it creates in us a deeper sense of appreciation for our heritage and our uniqueness as a people.

DepEd, in partnership with the City Government of Davao, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) and the Department of Tourism, with support from national and local sponsors will hold the festival from

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October 27-30 at Davao City. The festival is composed of plenary sessions, arts camp, workshops, performances, exhibits and parade.

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