



**44th Meeting of the ASEAN  
Committee on Culture and Information**

**OPENING REMARKS  
by  
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Head of Philippine Delegation  
Chairman of the Plenary Meetings**

I am happy to welcome all of you to Tagaytay City for the 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information. The members of the National COCI of the Philippines composed of officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the Office of the Press Secretary, the Philippine Information Agency and the Cultural Center of the Philippines join me in greeting you and welcoming you to this picturesque city where many Filipinos spend their week-ends for rest and recreation.

Tagaytay is famous for the Taal lake where the Taal volcano is located. It is reputed to be the world's smallest volcano and probably the most active as well. While going to the volcano island is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, we have not included it in the program of activities. It might erupt when you are there and we won't be able to finish the agenda. You can perhaps do so the next time you visit the Philippines in a private capacity.

I am happy to note that this year's meeting is going to be one of the best attended meetings of the COCI with 84 official delegates from the 10 member countries, the ASEAN Secretariat and our friends from Auseritage. Allow me therefore to acknowledge all of you, not individually but by country, so kindly stand up when your country is called so you can be properly applauded.

During the next 21/2 days we will be discussing matters that are aimed at helping strengthen our community of ASEAN nations towards one that is politically stable, economically viable, secured in our frontiers and socio-culturally harmonious. Through arts, culture, media and information, we will do our part in helping achieve these goals set forth in the ASEAN Charter. Although funding constraints limit our abilities to implement more programs that will further boost regional cooperation, there are other mechanisms that we can explore to achieve this objective. For one, we are seeing the greater funding participation of our national governments in the implementation of regional programs. Secondly, there is the thrust to enlist the cooperation of the private sector. And third, in view of the need

to strengthen relations with our neighbors we should explore more cooperation projects with dialogue partners.

I do hope the 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN COCI, which the Philippines is privileged to host, will be fruitful and enjoyable for all of us. Please do not hesitate to approach us, members of the Philippine delegation for any advice or service, official or personal, that will make your short stay memorable.

*Mabuhay ang COCI! Mabuhay ang ASEAN!*