

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **10144**



Introduced by Representative Hon. Christopher “Toff” P. de Venecia

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE SENTRO RIZAL, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE
SECTIONS 42 TO 47 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10067 OR THE NATIONAL
CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF 2009

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The world has grown to be more globalized and interdependent and has seen cultural diplomacy as a vital tool in enhancing interaction in the international community. Cultural diplomacy is the “exchange of ideas, information, art, food, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding”.¹ It is coined as a *soft power* that makes “use of positive attraction and persuasion to achieve foreign policy objectives” in contrast with *hard power* that uses coercion, force, and economic sanctions. It serves as an approach through which states can forge ties and build relations in the international community while advancing their foreign policies.

Governments have focused more on cultural diplomacy through organizations like *the British Council of the United Kingdom, Instituto Cervantes of Spain, Korean Foundation, and Japan Foundation*. In an article of Vice News on “*The Surprising Reason that there are so many Thai Restaurants in America*,” the government of Thailand made use of “gastrodiplomacy or culinary diplomacy by bolstering the presence of Thai cuisine abroad to increase its export and tourism revenues. Furthermore, in 2001 the Thai government established the Global Thai Restaurant Company, Ltd., in an effort to establish at least 3,000 Thai restaurants worldwide. These nations have created a working relationship with other governments and private organizations through their culture, art, food, sports, literature, music, film, education, science, business and economy.

The Philippines, as a “*small power*,” can make use of cultural diplomacy as a tool to earn recognition and respect in the international community. We are a diverse and rich country in terms of culture and heritage, tourist destinations, music, food, art, film, textiles, design and creative output.

¹ Milton Cummings Jr., *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*, (Washington, D.C: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003)

Our geological structure and history greatly contributed to this diversity and richness. We have been globally known for our talents in various fields and have received recognition with the likes actor Dolly de leon who was nominated for the Golden Globes, Tony Award-winning actress Lea Salonga who has excelled in Broadway, Disney and the West End, Chef Johanne Siy who won Asia’s best female Chef, Michael Cinco as a fashion designer of local and international celebrities, Kenneth Cobonpue who has crafted furniture that have graced the pages of global titles and the homes of global celebrities, and the songs of Ez mil, Flow G, and Shanti Dope are included as track songs for NBA 2k23. The list goes on.

Strengthening the Sentro Rizal and attaching it to the DFA is the initial step in materializing cultural diplomacy initiatives. Through this measure, the 37 Sentro Rizal Hubs abroad can serve as beacons for Philippine arts and culture. It can take a proactive role in the international community in promoting Philippine history, culture, and creative content while fostering relations with foreign governments and furthering foreign relations.

To maximize the country's cultural diplomacy initiatives, the government must create and develop a “Philippine Brand”. In our consultative meetings with the Directors of Instituto Servantes and Japan Foundation, they have expressed the importance of a Filipino Branding and identity because it provides the world an impression of what being a Filipino is and what our country provides. Integrating a strong “Philippine Brand” in cultural diplomacy is important in generating potential benefits for the country since a nation brand essentially links culture and commerce, both can reinforce each other to produce a favorable image for the Philippines and at the same time, serve its economic interests.² South Korea is a classic example of how branding or rebranding transforms the nation's economic and socio- cultural landscape. Before South Korea's positive brand transformation, the international community stereotyped it as a place of poverty and violence.³

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



HON. CHRISTOPHER V.P. DE VENECIA
Fourth District, Pangasinan

² Wong, Andrea Chloe, Philippine Cultural Diplomacy: Unraveling its Full Potential, July 2016

³ Mirshahi, Rasar, Hallyu: How South Korean Cultural Diplomacy Shapes the Nation Brand, 30, November 2021

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Sentro Rizal Act”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy and State Principles.* — The 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. The State shall also ensure equal access to cultural opportunities through the educational system, public or private cultural entities, scholarships, grants and other incentives, and community cultural centers, and other public venues.

It is thus the policy of the State to provide a wider knowledge of the Philippines and Filipino culture through cultural, scientific, educational, and economic collaborative opportunities with other countries through the Sentro Rizal system.

SECTION 3. *Strengthening of Sentro Rizal as a Cultural Diplomacy Hub.* — The Sentro Rizal, which was established under Republic Act No. 10066, or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, is hereby converted to be the cultural diplomacy office attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

SECTION 4. *Functions.* — The Sentro Rizal shall have the following functions:

- (a) Become the center for cultural diplomacy activities of the Philippine Embassies abroad and of the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- (b) Provide overseas Filipinos and foreign nationals opportunities to be educated and exposed to the history and culture of the Philippines;

- (c) Supervise and coordinate Philippine schools for Filipino children overseas;
- (d) Provide support to Filipino creators in making their goods and services available to Filipino and non-Filipino nationals in territories in which the Sentro Rizal hub is located;
- (e) Become the repository of materials in embassies on Philippine arts, culture and language, including but not limited to, books, digital video discs, compact discs, films, magazines, artworks, tourism promotion materials, information materials, etc. All these shall be made available to the public, both Filipino and foreign;
- (f) Establish and fund activities for cultural, scientific, creative, and educational programs in countries with Philippine embassies, including but not limited to, language courses, culinary courses, co-production of Filipino-forward content, and other forms of cultural exchanges;
- (g) Coordinate with the Department of Tourism, Department of Education, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippine Creative Industry Development Council, the Commission on Higher Education, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, the National Archives of the Philippines, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the National Library of the Philippines, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to provide tourism, historical, trade and investment, and educational materials to the *Sentro Rizal* branches;

SEC 5. *Creation of the Sentro Rizal Council.* - The Philippine Sentro Rizal Council (“Council”), is hereby created to spearhead the development and promotion of the Sentro Rizal Sites.

The Council shall be composed of five (7) ex-officio members, specifically:

- (i) Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, who shall serve as the Chair of the Council;
- (ii) Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority;
- (iii) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry;
- (iv) Secretary of the Department of Tourism
- (v) Secretary of the Department of Education;
- (vi) Chairperson of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts;
- (vii) Secretary of the Presidential Communications Office;

SECTION 6. *Secretariat* - A Secretariat to the Council shall be established within the DFA which shall be headed by the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General shall be assisted by six (6) Assistant Directors and an administrative staff which shall be composed of:

- Project Management Division
- Foreign Media Relations Division

- Global Culture Promotion Division
- Intellectual Property and Legal Specialist
- Communications Division
- Administrative Secretariat

SECTION 7. *Mandate, Powers, and Functions of the Council.* - The Council shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- 1) Formulate and implement a Sentro Rizal Development Plan with performance outcomes including cultural influence, proliferation of Filipino creative content in foreign territories, commercial development, public opinion, and other soft power indicators;
- 2) Review all existing policies, plans, programs, and projects of the government and formulate, in coordination with government agencies, non government organizations, business support organizations and creative workers associations, national policies, plans, and programs that will help the Sentro Rizal hubs;
- 3) Develop and sustain cooperative exchanges, partnerships, and collaborations with and among government agencies, creative entities, organizations, and associations, locally and overseas, whether from the public or private sector, and coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and other pertinent government agencies for overseas cooperative exchanges, partnerships, and collaborations;
- 4) Establish and promote cultural and mechanism of continuing dialogue between government, business support organization and creative workers association within the creative industries, and the academe on proper planning and evaluation of policies, programs, and projects affecting its stakeholders
- 5) Generate and mobilize resources from domestic and foreign sources, receive and accept donations and other conveyances by gratuitous title, including funds, materials and services, and rationalize the use and distribution of such resources to the various Sentro Rizal sites;
- 6) Accept grants, bequests, contributions and donations from local or foreign sources; Provided, That such grants, bequests, contributions, and donations shall be deductible for income tax purposes in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended;
- 7) Review and approve proposals of Sentro Rizal Sites/Hub to conduct cultural awareness/promotional initiatives;
- 8) Develop and provide incentives for private organizations, businesses, or corporations that will support financially and/or logistically to our Sentro Rizal Sites with their programs and projects;

- 9) Compile film, music, art, and other media with guidance from NCCA to be presented/promoted in activities organized by the Sentro Rizal outposts in other countries;
- 10) Identify and establish Sentro Rizal sites in Philippine Embassies;
- 11) Create a benchmark for a top performing Sentro Rizal site and provide incentives thereof;
- 12) Raise or borrow funds, within the limitation provided by law, adequate and necessary funds from local or foreign sources, to finance its programs and projects;

SECTION 8. *The Sentro Rizal Development Plan.* - The Sentro Rizal Council, in coordination with key government agencies, shall formulate the Sentro Rizal Development Plan that sets forth the objectives, targets, strategies, and activities on the development and promotion of Philippine cultural diplomacy.

The plan shall include the following components, among others as may later be determined:

- 1) Well-defined and measurable goals and key performance indicators for the Philippine arts and culture which shall include market creation and expansion;
- 2) Feasibility in sharing facilities with the host country, e.g. films studios, and archives, etc;
- 3) Technical, technological, and financial assistance programs for the promotion and marketing of goods and services generated by the creative industries;
- 4) Programs that promote stronger linkages and collaborations among stakeholders in the creative industries and government;
- 5) Strategies that allow creative industries to develop greater capacity and greater access to both national and international programs and harness their talents, skills, and know-how in the creative industries

SECTION 9. *Office of the Sentro Rizal Hub* - The Sentro Rizal Hub shall be composed of the following offices:

1. Office of the Director
2. Division/Sections which shall be composed of:
 - a. Arts and Culture;
 - b. Language and Education; and
 - c. Administrative Staff

These divisions shall be under the direction and supervision of the Sentro Rizal Hub Director.

The Arts and Culture section/division shall create and implement projects for the promotion of Philippine Arts and Culture.

The Language and Education section shall create programs that will teach Filipino language and history.

SECTION 10. *The Director.* — Each Sentro Rizal shall be headed by a Director which shall be appointed by the Council.

The Director of the Sentro Rizal Hub shall be at least 30 years of age at the time of appointment. The Director should have knowledge and experience in the field of public and cultural diplomacy.

SECTION 11. *Divisions of the Sentro Rizal Hub* - Each Division office shall be headed by the Section/Division Chief which shall be hired by the Director of the Sentro Rizal Hub.

The Section/Division Chief shall be at least 25 years of age at the time of hiring. They should have knowledge and experience in the section/division applied for.

SECTION 12. *Powers and Functions of the Director* - The Director shall exercise the following powers and functions:

1. Implement the development plan of the Council;
2. Create a program and plan of projects to be implemented in their respective Hubs which shall be submitted to the Sentro Rizal Council;
3. Hold regular cultural exchange programmes for practitioners of traditional and contemporary artistic expressions;
4. Utilize traditional and non-traditional media and activities to promote Philippine cultures and creatives abroad; and
5. Facilitate intercultural dialogues to emphasize commonalities of social values;
6. Conduct cultural mapping in their respective territorial jurisdictions to identify on how to integrate, and promote Filipino culture and creative entities and products;
7. Shall submit to the Council a year end report; and
8. Partner with foreign government agencies for teaching of Filipino Language and Culture in their national universities.

SECTION 13. *Private Sector Participation.* — The Sentro Rizal shall involve private sector partners in the formulation and implementation of its cultural diplomacy programs.

SECTION 14. *Global Filipino Week.* – To promote Filipino culture, artist, film, food, language, and other products of the creative industries, a Global Filipino Week shall be annually held in all Sentro Rizal Cultural Hubs.

SECTION 15. *Filipino Brand.* - In order to build , manage, and enhance the image and reputation of the Philippines, the council shall within 3 months from inception develop and create a *Filipino Brand*.

The Filipino brand shall reflect the arts and culture, products and services, and tourism of the Philippines.

SECTION 15. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the immediate implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 16. *Annual Report.* - The Council shall submit to the President of the Philippine and both Houses of Congress a report giving a detailed account of the implementation of this Act, including recommendations for legislation.

SEC. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DFA Secretary shall, in consultation with other concerned government agencies, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.* – Sections 42 to 47 of Republic Act No. 10067 are hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 20. *Effectivity Clause.* – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,