

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) for inviting me to this very meaningful gathering.

The creative industry has been a significant contributor to our economic growth and a platform to showcase the Philippines' diverse and rich culture. It also highlights the Philippines' distinctive brand of creativity.

Creative MSMEs, such as artists, filmmakers, designers, and those working in other fields of arts, crafts, media, and entertainment, should be given the opportunity to thrive to boost our economy and enrich our cultural landscape.

We must always foster a sense of pride and keep our Filipino roots alive by supporting our fellow Filipinos' artistic endeavors. These includes finding ways to protect our Creative MSMEs from disasters and other external shocks, and addressing other challenges that may hamper the livelihoods of MSME owners and employees.

As a legislator, I truly believe that government intervention is crucial for our creative industries to thrive and reach its full potential. This sector is integral to our economy and economic growth, and it provides job opportunities to our people.

The House of Representatives, under the leadership of Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, is committed to providing support and protection to our Creative MSMEs through legislation, ensuring there is a roadmap for the growth and development of our creative industries

The Special Committee on Creative Industries in the House of Representatives under the chairmanship of Pangasinan 4th District Rep. Christopher "Toff" De Venecia has deliberated and passed legislations that aims to address the needs of the Philippine Creative Industries.

During the 18th Congress, one of the notable measures that successfully passed both houses of Congress and was ratified into law by then-President Rodrigo Roa Duterte was RA 11904, otherwise known as the Philippine Creative Industries Act. This law aims to support and strengthen the rights of our Filipino creatives.

In this 19th Congress, two measures were passed by the Creative Industries Committee that will benefit specific industries. Specifically, the substitute bill on footwear, leather goods, and tannery industries in the Philippines was approved with amendments by the Committee on Ways and Means and is now referred to the Committee on Appropriations for further scrutiny.

The bill on the Gastronomy and Culinary Development Act was approved by the Creative Industries Committee and Substitute Bill has now been submitted to the Committee on Appropriations for their comments.

Moreover, the Special Committee on Creative Industries is set to deliberate on bills that would significantly benefit our MSMEs. These includes House Bill Nos. 669, 1289, and 7244, which propose the creation of the National Creative Industries Program. This program aims to provide strategic investments, assistance, programs, schemes, loans, and guarantees for MSMEs in the creative industries.

Furthermore, there are bills on film and television tourism in the Philippines, which aims to promote the country as a film destination. These includes House Bill Nos. 2165, 4062, 5072, and 6480.

This is in line with His Excellency's commitment to make the Philippines one of ASEAN's creative powerhouses. President Marcos recognizes the value that our MSMEs in the creative industry brings to our country, our people, and our culture.

The recent COVID-19 Pandemic has caused disruption to the creative industries, resulting in reduced income for our creatives and significant revenue losses for our MSMEs.

If there's one lesson that we should learn from the pandemic, it's the importance of adapting and innovating. We must remain resilient and flexible to overcome future challenges.

As we commence this workshop, let us find ways to mitigate the impacts of disasters and other factors that may affect our Creative MSMEs and share our best practices to fill in the gaps that have plagued the industry.

We must learn to collaborate not just locally but also internationally in a bid to expand market opportunities, generate more jobs for the Filipino people, and empower our creatives

That being said, allow me to express my deepest appreciation to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their guidance and support in fostering the growth of our Creative Industries.

Let us do our best to preserve and celebrate our rich culture and heritage by promoting Philippine products and services on the international stage.

By strengthening international ties, we can get the support and resources that can help us navigate upcoming challenges and recover.