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## **ANDANAR URGES ASEAN DELEGATES TO CONVEY GAINS TO PEOPLE**

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Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar on Wednesday urged delegates of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) Sub-Committee on Information to step up on their efforts to communicate the gains and initiatives of the regional bloc to its respective citizens.

"With all the communication tools now available to us, both traditional and digital media, I encourage you all to continue to maximize all of these in harping on the benefits of ASEAN. Alongside this are our continuing efforts as well to develop our information and media professionals to be better and more effective communicators," Andanar said in his keynote message at the 20th Meeting of the ASEAN COCI Sub-Committee on Information at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Manila.

Andanar cited the gains of ASEAN in establishing peace and harmony, strengthening the economy, and promoting tourism in the region.

He added that there are also initiatives undertaken by ASEAN to promote social development, environmental protection, and cultural heritage preservation.

"ASEAN has indeed gone a long way. With its over five decades of existence as a regional association, ASEAN has done much work on building an integrated, peaceful and stable community with shared prosperity," he said.

Andanar said communicating these gains is the challenge for the ASEAN COCI.

"Are our peoples really realizing and recognizing all of these? Now here lies the continuing challenge for us in the ASEAN information sector to further step up our efforts in bringing to our peoples the message that ASEAN is working for them and that, as the ASEAN Communication Master Plan puts it, ASEAN is indeed a community of opportunities for all," he said.

Andanar said he looks forward to having more avenues to engage and cooperate with other ASEAN sectors and external partners to instill ASEAN pride and sense of belongingness among ASEAN people.

Delegates from the 10 ASEAN member-states, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, attended the meeting.

In Aug. 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the PCOO launched a book highlighting the achievements made by the ASEAN during the Philippines chairmanship in 2017.

Among ASEAN's achievements under Manila's watch as chairman are the signing of the landmark ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, and the adoption of a framework for a Code of Conduct of Parties (COC) in the South China Sea.

The ASEAN was established on Aug. 8, 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration -- later on referred to as the ASEAN Declaration -- by the five founding members of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

The bloc has since grown into an intergovernmental organization composed of 10 countries of Southeast Asia with several dialogue partners

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1065784>

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