

FOUR AMBASSADORS VISIT LOBOC

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March 22, 2013, was a day of excitement for the town of Loboc. To host not one, but 4 Ambassadors with their families, was very flattering for a fourth class municipality. The Guest List includes His Excellency John Gomes, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Philippines, His Excellency Yohanes Kristiarto Soeryo Legowo, the Ambassador of Indonesia to the Philippines, His Excellency Massimo Roscigno, Ambassador of Italy to the Philippines, His Excellency Nguyen Vu Tu, the Ambassador of Vietnam to the Philippines, Ambassador Zenaida Rabago, Former Philippine Ambassador to Bangladesh, Honorable Carlos Chan, Philippine Special Envoy to China, and the families of the ambassadors of Vietnam and Indonesia.

The guests visited the Bohol Tarsier Conservation Area, Upper Bonbon, Loboc, and partook the local delicacies for snacks at Loboc River Resort, Camaya-an. Refreshed, they went directly to the Loboc Tourism Complex. There, the dignitaries were met with flag waving students, LGU officials and employees, barangay officials, the community and the Loboc Youth Ambassador Band.

Upon acknowledging the crowd, they went directly to the Loboc Children's Theatre and were entertained by the world-renowned Loboc Children's Choir. This was followed by a dinner at Floating Restaurant and Night River Cruising. They were so enthralled by the musicality of the Lobocanons that they sang with the Mandin Brothers, the on-board entertainers of the Floating Restaurant, and danced with the Balsa performers. The festive atmosphere of singing and dancing continued in the floating restaurant on their way back to the docking port at the tourism complex.

Fireworks greeted the guests upon their arrival from the river cruise. It was followed by a short program. In between the talks was a rendition from the Loboc Youth Ambassador Band. His Excellency Massimo Roscigno of Italy said that he was overwhelmed by the show. He further said that over 30 years in foreign service, there were countless occasions that they were received by cities and authorities but he can recall only a few if any, such warmth and affection that our people extended to them. Additionally, he said we have the most important and precious talent of the young and old. His Excellency Ambassador Nguyen Vu Tu of Vietnam said how he wished he visited this place earlier, which possessed one of the most important assets of today's economy, the human capital. He further predicted that our place would continue to pick up. The Ambassador of Bangladesh, who requested the Loboc Children's Choir earlier to sing his favourite song, Silent Night, said the song has a relationship with the Loboc environment - everything so silent, so serene yet it is so bright. Consequently, Indonesian Ambassador Yohanes Kristiarto Soeryo Legowo felt so privileged to be welcomed with generous hospitality and true friendship. He also said that the only regret he has is why only now he visited Loboc. To quote him, "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang ". He should have visited Loboc on his first year where he really experienced one of the best things that he ever had.

During the visit, Special Envoy Carlos Chan gave the confirmation to fund the Loboc River Eco Falls Project which is an ecologically hazard free development by using non-electric ram pump water supply system; pico hydro to energize outdoor LED ambient lighting and the eco composite; and, outdoor recycled wood composite planks as decking.

On the other hand, Loboc recently received the Galing Pook Award, a pioneering program that recognizes innovation and excellence in local governance. This year, the Galing Pook winners were chosen from 160 programs submitted by local government units, after undergoing a

rigorous multi-level screening process. Loboc's entry is Realizing Dreams Through Tourism Development where tourism gave the town an income of P51M for 2011. This income has helped the town cut its IRA dependency on basically all of the LGU's operations - salary, infrastructure, health, social welfare, education, etc.

The award was conferred by DILG Secretary Mar Roxas on March 18, 2013 at Diosdado Macapagal Hall, 10th Flr Landbank Plaza, Malate, Manila.