

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)**



23 MAY 29 P 1 :31

**SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 642**

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPACT OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS ON THE INTEGRITY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES IN THE COUNTRY, IN LIGHT OF THE FIRE INCIDENT AT THE MANILA CENTRAL POST OFFICE, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF INTEGRATING CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES CONSERVATION INTO THE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), world heritage properties and heritage sites in general are exposed to the impacts of natural and man-triggered catastrophic events, which threaten their integrity and may compromise their value. The loss or deterioration of these outstanding properties has severely negative impacts on local and national communities, both because of their cultural importance, and because of their socio-economic value;

WHEREAS, recent natural and man-made disasters in the Philippines, such as the magnitude seven (7) earthquake in Northern Luzon and the fire that broke out at the Manila Central Post Office showed the vulnerability of heritage sites to disasters;

WHEREAS, in July 2022, the Vigan Cathedral, Calle Crisologo, and Bantay Bell Tower were among the heritage and historical sites and structures reportedly damaged by the strong earthquake;

WHEREAS, on May 22, 2023, it was reported that a fire broke out at the Manila Central Post Office, heavily damaging the exterior and interior of the historic building;

WHEREAS, the Manila Central Post Office was built by renowned architects Tomas Mapua, Juan Marcos Arellano, and Ralph Doane in 1926 to house the

headquarters of the then Bureau of Posts and become the center of Philippine postal services¹;

WHEREAS, the building follows a neoclassical architectural style also known as classical revival architecture, characterized by its grand façade and intricate details. It features a large central dome and two wings adorned with columns and sculptures²;

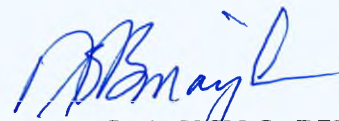
WHEREAS, according to Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco, the Department of Tourism (DOT) regards the decades-old structure as a “cultural treasure”, adding it deserves national attention and support. She also stated that the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, which is an attached agency of the DOT, has long led the assistance in terms of rehabilitation of heritage structures³;

WHEREAS, according to UNESCO, existing national and local disaster preparedness and response mechanisms usually do not include heritage expertise in their operations. As a result, hundreds of sites are critically exposed to potential hazards, while communities worldwide are not harnessing the full potential of their heritage, both tangible and intangible, for reducing disaster risk;

WHEREAS, it is high time that the Philippine government assess the integrity of heritage sites in the country for better protection and conservation pursuant to Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 which provides that in times of armed conflict, natural disasters and other exceptional events that endanger the cultural heritage of the country, all national cultural treasures or national historical landmarks, sites or monuments shall be given priority protection by the government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate of the Philippines directs the Senate Committee on Tourism to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the impact of natural and man-made disasters on the integrity of cultural heritage sites in the country, in light of the fire incident at the Manila Central Post Office, with the end in view of integrating cultural heritage sites conservation into the disaster risk reduction and management plan;

Adopted,



MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY

¹CNN News website, How the Manila Central Post Office made its mark in PH history <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2023/5/23/Manila-Central-Post-Office-history.html> .

²Manila Bulletin News website, Manila Central Post Office gutted by fire: 4 facts about the building, <https://mb.com.ph/2023/5/22/manila-central-post-office-gutted-by-fire-4-facts-about-the-building>

³Philippine News Agency website, DOT ready to support rehab of razed Manila Post Office, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1202161>