

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8492, February 12, 1998]

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL MUSEUM SYSTEM,
PROVIDING FOR ITS PERMANENT HOME AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act may be known as the "National Museum Act of 1998."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to pursue and support the cultural development of the Filipino people, through the preservation, enrichment and dynamic evolution of Filipino national culture, based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression.

SEC. 3. *Conversion of the National Museum.* – To implement the above declared State policies, and to ensure its independence and autonomy, the present National Museum hereafter referred to as the Museum, is hereby converted into a trust of the government. The National Museum is detached from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and from the National Commission of Culture and the Arts. It shall be placed solely for budgetary purposes under the Office of the President.

The Museum, as established under this Act shall be known by the name of "National Museum," and by that name shall be known and have perpetual succession with the power, limitations, and restriction hereafter contained and no other.

The National Museum shall be a permanent institution in the service of the community and its development, accessible to the public, and not intended for profit. It shall obtain, keep, study and present material evidence of man and his environment. The National Museum shall inform the general public about these activities for the purpose of study, education and entertainment.

The primary mission of the National Museum shall be to acquire documents, preserve, exhibit, and foster scholarly study and appreciation of works of art specimens and cultural and historical artifacts.

Pending its reorganization by the board of trustees, the National Museum shall be composed of the Museum structure, organization and its collections, properties, assets and liabilities.

SEC. 4. *Permanent Home; Evidence of Title to Site and Buildings.* – The whole Executive House Building also known as the old Congress Building, the Department of Finance building and Department of Tourism building on Agrifina Circle shall be the permanent and exclusive site of the Museum. They shall be known as the

National Museum Complex. The Executive House shall now be known as the "National Museum."

The site and lands selected for the building for the Museum shall be deemed appropriated to the Museum, and the record of the description of such site and lands, or a copy thereof, certified by the Chairman and Secretary of the Board of Trustees, shall be received as evidence in all courts of the extent and boundaries of the lands appropriated to the Museum.

SEC. 5. *Preservation of the Senate Session Hall.* – The National Museum shall preserve the Senate Session Hall as a tribute to the legacy of the great men and women of the Philippine Senate for their invaluable contributions to the Filipino people, and as a relic where democracy and freedom reigned and events of national significance transpired.

SEC. 6. *Objectives.* – The Museum shall have the following objectives:

6.1. As an educational institution, the National Museum shall take the lead in disseminating knowledge of Filipino cultural and historical heritage and developing a corps of professionals knowledgeable about the preservation, enrichment and dynamic evaluation of the Filipino national culture.

6.2. As a scientific institution, the Museum shall continue to conduct basic and systematic research programs combining integrated laboratory and field work in anthropology and archaeology, geology and paleontology, botany, and zoology. It shall maintain reference collections on these disciplines and promote scientific development in the Philippines.

6.3. As a cultural center, the Museum shall take the lead in the study and preservation of the nation's rich artistic and cultural heritage, in the reconstruction and rebuilding of our past, and the development of national cultural wealth.

SEC. 7. *Duties and Functions.* – The Museum shall have the following duties and functions:

7.1. Acquire documents, collect, preserve, maintain, administer and exhibit to the public, cultural materials, objects of art, archaeological artifacts, ecofacts, relics and other materials embodying the cultural and natural heritage of the Filipino nation, as well as those of foreign origin. Materials relevant to the recent history of the country shall be likewise acquired, collected, preserved, maintained, advertised and exhibited by the Museum;

7.2. Conduct researches, archaeological and scientific, on Philippine flora and fauna; collect, preserve, identify and exhibit to the public systematically all types of plants and animals found in the Philippines, prepare for publication manuscripts and scientific papers on them and maintain a reference collection on such subjects;

7.3. Document all objects held by the National Museum in its collections or borrowed by the Museum by registering them in an inventory and cataloguing them, and manage any movement of the collections both within the Museum

and elsewhere in such a way that the Museum is able to locate any object in the collections at any time, initially on paper records, but to be converted to computerized records on a professional museum documentation system as soon as time and budget allow;

7.4. Conduct researches on the origin, history and geographic distribution of, and to collect, preserve, study and exhibit rocks, minerals and fossils of plants and animals; maintain a reference collection and to prepare for publication scientific studies on them;

7.5. Regulate registration, excavation, preservation and exportation of Philippine cultural properties through a legal department and customs department which shall be established for these purposes;

7.6. Implement the pertinent provisions of Presidential Decree No. 374, as further amended, and other related laws on the protection and conservation of cultural properties;

7.7. Undertake research on salvage archaeology, monitor and control archaeological excavations, diggings and researches into Philippine pre-history and proto-history;

7.8. Gather, identify, reconstruct, restore and maintain a national archaeological reference collection; study archaeological artifacts and ecofacts, with their corresponding data and deduce archaeological interpretations;

7.9. Undertake researches on the pre-history of the Philippines in order to define the foundations of the cultures of the people by conducting systematic and controlled archaeological excavations in different sites on land and underwater, and to supplement existing historical documentation;

7.10. Collect, preserve, restore and exhibit to the public objects of arts;

7.11. Conduct researches on Philippine arts and its relations to the arts of other countries and prepare for publication research papers on them;

7.12. Carry out researches among different people of the Philippines to define the ethnography of each group, to establish the ethnology and to document for posterity and exhibit to the public their traditional and existing cultures, practices and artistic forms expressive of their culture;

7.13. Collect, acquire, identify, reconstruct, restore, preserve and maintain ethnographic items; gather their interpretations; mount exhibitions and prepare technical manuscripts for publication;

7.14. Maintain a chemical and physical laboratory where scientific analysis of materials recovered from archaeological and ethnographic sites may be undertaken for their preservation;

7.15. Plan, organize and stage exhibitions in all disciplines covered by the Museum geology, cultural properties, zoology, botany, archaeology, arts, anthropology, restoration and engineering;

7.16. Plan and organize library services, guided tours, lectures, seminars, symposia or workshops;

7.17. Implement and enforce Presidential Decree Nos. 260, 374, 756, 1109, 1492, 996, 1683 and 1726-A;

7.18. Supervise restoration, preservation, reconstruction, demolition, alteration, relocation and remodeling of immovable properties and archaeological landmarks and sites;

7.19. Disseminate astronomical knowledge and information through planetarium shows, lectures and demonstrations, exhibits and actual celestial observations;

7.20. Maintain, preserve, interpret and exhibit to the public the artifacts in sites of the Paleolithic habitation site of the possible earliest man to the Philippines, the Neolithic habitation of the ancient Filipino at the Tabon Caves, and other important archaeological sites;

7.21. Secure and receive bilateral and international grants and endowments to support its programs/projects;

7.22. Initiate, promote, encourage and support the establishment and promotion of, and extend management, technical and financial assistance to regional, provincial, city and/or local museums; and

7.23. Develop and implement consortium agreements and linkages with institutions of higher learning and other organizations engaged in similar researches being undertaken by the National Museum.

SEC. 8. *Board of Trustees.* – The business of the Museum shall be conducted at the city of Manila by a Board of Trustees to be composed of the Chairmen of the Committees on Education of the Senate and House of Representatives, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and seven (7) representatives from the private sector. Of the seven (7) representatives from the private sector, there shall be included, one (1) distinguished Filipino Artist, one (1) distinguished Filipino Scientist, and one (1) distinguished Filipino historian.

The private sector representatives shall be selected on the basis of their demonstrated interest in and commitment to arts and culture.

The Director of the National Museum is an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees.

The Chairman of the Board shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The President shall be the National Museum's Honorary Chairman and patron.

SEC. 9. *Appointment of Trustees.* – The private sector representatives shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines from a short list nominated by recognized NGOs in the Museum and cultural sectors, as well as by prestigious business groups.

Of the private sector representatives, three (3) shall be appointed for four-year term; three (3) shall be appointed for a two-year term; and one (1) shall appointed for one-year term.

They shall all be eligible for one reappointment. Appointment to a position vacated due to death, disability, resignation or any similar cause, shall be for the duration of said unexpired term only.

SEC. 10. Organization of Board; Expenses, Gratuitous Services; Powers. – The Board of Trustees shall meet in the city of Manila and elect five (5) of their members as an executive committee, and shall fix the time for the regular meetings of the Board; and, on application of any three (3) of the trustees to the Director of the Museum, it shall be his duty to call a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, of which he shall give notice, by letter, to each of the members. The Board may function notwithstanding vacancies, and, at any meeting of the Board, six (6) shall constitute a quorum to do business. Each member of the Board shall be paid his necessary travel and other actual expenses, in attending meetings of the Board, which shall be audited by the executive committee, and recorded by the Director of the Museum; but his service as trustee shall be gratuitous.

The Board may establish such other committees as it may deem proper. The Chairman of any committee to be established must be a member of the Board.

The Board is authorized to adopt an official seal which shall be judicially noticed and to make such bylaws, rules and regulations, as it deems necessary for the administration of its functions under this Act, including, among other matters, bylaws, rules and regulations relating to the acquisition, exhibition, and loan of works of art, the administration of its trust funds, and the organization and procedure of the Board.

SEC. 11. Director of the National Museum; Duties; Programs and Studies; Annual Report to Congress. – The Board of Trustees shall appoint the Director of the Museum and two (2) Assistant Directors. The Director shall be in charge of the overall operations of the Museum and implement the policies set by the Board of Trustees and programs approved by it. The Director shall have a proven track record of competent administration and shall be knowledgeable about Museum management.

The Director assisted by two (2) Assistant Directors shall be in charge of the expanded archaeological sites and the Regional Museum Division of the Museum.

SEC. 12. Acting Director. – The Board may, by an instrument in writing filed in the office of the Secretary thereof, designate and appoint an Assistant Director to act as Director when there shall be a vacancy in said office, and whenever the Director shall be unable to perform the duties of his office due to illness, absence, or other causes, and in such case the person so appointed may perform all the duties impose on the Director by law until the vacancy shall be filled or such inability shall cease. The Board may change such designation and appointment from time to time as the interests of the Museum may in its judgment require.

SEC. 13. Salary and Removal of Director and Assistants. – The Director and his