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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Panay Bukidnon SHS learner shares IP culture in international cultural diversity forum**

June 2, 2021 – In celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity held every May 21 of the year, a Panay Bukidnon senior high school student shared his passion for Indigenous Peoples music and culture as he represented the Philippines in the virtual International Youth Forum on Cultural Diversity.

“I believe my work in music can unite people because music transcends differences in boundaries. Through music we can communicate, it has the capacity to bring us together and express ourselves and our identities,” Rennel S. Lavilla, a Panay Bukidnon indigenous youth, said.

As a traditional artist, Lavilla is a skilled crafts maker specializing in embroidery and instrument making and a seasoned musician performing various Panay Bukidnon vocal and instrumental musical genres.

In 2019, he participated as one of the six national finalists of the National Music Competition for Young Artists (NAMCYA). Currently, he is exploring creative solutions in advocating and promoting instrument construction and performance among his fellow Panay Bukidnon youth.

Lavilla joined Aniket Balram Naidu of India, Aydin Quach of Canada, Januarsti Supramita Ningrum of Indonesia, and Kaedi Khama of South Africa in the youth forum as they shared experiences, insights, and advocacies that would be beneficial to the various communities they belong to.

“To my fellow youth, we should be proud of ourselves and our culture. Let us be an inspiration to our peers, be strong and persistent with our advocacies because we can be the agents of change for a better world,” he said.

In collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Region 6/7 & 8, Balay Patawili, Inc., Panay Indigenous Culture Advocacy Group (PICAG), and EmpowerED, the Department hosted the forum to provide a platform for young leaders and advocates to discuss issues and resolutions on cultural diversity in the context of the present pandemic.

“Culture retains our humanity amidst technological advancements and continuously shifting socio-economic landscape. Culture identifies us as people of one nation. Our art reflects the wide range of cultural influences, and how these influences honed Philippine art. I commend our learners and partners for imparting their heritage to the world,” Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones said.

The forum was attended by young leaders, students, and advocates for global citizenship, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), respect for cultural diversity, environmental protection, peace, and global understanding.

“We should provide a platform for the youth to be heard, especially the voices of those making a meaningful difference in fostering cultural understanding, responsible global



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citizenship, peace, and development around the globe," Undersecretary for Planning, Human Resource, and Organizational Development Jesus L.R. Mateo said.

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