

Corregidor to be revived as tourist destination

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The Corregidor Foundation Inc. is all set to break ground for the island's full restoration to become the Philippines' next must-see destination for tourists seeking to experience a piece of history, plus a total mindbody-spiritual rejuvenation and relaxation.



Former tourism undersecretary and fitness guru Cynthia Lagdameo Carrion, recently appointed to head the Foundation, is seeking to tap into the fast emerging memorial tourism market and the \$691-million wellness and faith tourism.

Other members of the foundation's board are Tourism Secretary Wanda Teo, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, retired AFP chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero and TIEZA COO Joselito Paragas.

The tadpole-shaped Corregidor Island is more than a historical landmark that had seen the heroism and passion for freedom of our soldiers in World War II when the Island served as the harbor defenses of Manila Bay.

"It is beyond being a historical landmark. Corregidor Island's varied terrain is home to a vast array of century-old trees, including fruit-bearing trees. Greening and reforesting the island will further improve its ecosystem and level up its biological diversity that will be perfect as a bird-watching sanctuary, and an adventure, wellness and relaxation refuge," said Carrion.

"A trek on its rolling terrain, side-by-side with friendly monkeys while enjoying the vista of the seas of Manila Bay and nearby islands is an invigorating experience," she added.

Carrion lamented that the foundation does not even have a website or social media platform. She hopes to transform it into a government corporation, as directed by the Governance Commission of GOCCs (GCG) since 2014.

"We cannot just sit down and witness the alarming and fast-declining number of visitors to the island. The meager 51,000 visitors in 2017 is a shame compared to the 4.16 million visitors of Korea's War Veterans Memorial, or neighboring Cambodia's Choeung Ek, The Killing Fields with its 210,000 visitors in 2016, or to Vietnam's Veterans Memorial that had 5.07 million visitors in same year," said Carrion.

"It's time to take a look at how we can promote and market this island to the world. We are set to launch a strong digital marketing thrust to reach global markets in the soonest time possible."