

More Chinese tourists to boost PH tourism industry - solon

Manila Bulletin · 18 Mar 2024 · 2 · By DEXTER BARRO II

Quezon City 4th district Rep. **Marvin Rillo** is optimistic that 2024 will see a revitalized tourism industry as long as tourists from China continue to visit the Philippines.

“We need the number of Chinese travelers to return to their pre-pandemic levels to sustain the full recovery of our highly labor-intensive tourism enterprises,” he said in a statement on Sunday, March 17.

Despite the Philippines’ ongoing maritime dispute with China regarding the West Philippine Sea (WPS), Rillo said this should not “discourage” the Department of Tourism (DOT) from “seeking new opportunities to capture a larger number of Chinese tourists”.

“In order to showcase our tourist attractions and lure more Chinese travelers, we would urge the DOT to send delegations of Philippine travel, tour, hotel, and resort operators to China,” he explained.

Citing figures from the DOT, the lawmaker pointed out China has recently soared as the third biggest supplier of foreign visitors to the Philippines, after South Korea and the United States, in the first two months of 2024.

The number of Chinese travelers that arrived in the country surged by 235 percent to 82,314 in the first two months of 2024, from 24,552 in the January to February period in 2023.

“The surge in Chinese tourist arrivals in the Philippines in the first two months of 2024 is very encouraging, and we hope that the uptrend will keep going in the months ahead,” noted Rillo.

In 2019, the year before the Covid-19 pandemic, China was the second biggest supplier of foreign visitors to the Philippines, behind South Korea.

Rillo, who is a vice chairperson of the House Committee on Tourism, noted that he is “counting on” a revitalized tourism industry to propel the creation of new jobs in services such as accommodation, transport, food and beverage, and entertainment, and in other activities in the value chain.

A total of 1,093,283 foreign tourists arrived in the Philippines in the first two months of 2024, up 27.6 percent from 856,883 in the January to February period in 2023.

South Korea and the United States supplied 329,651 and 185,387 visitors, respectively, in the first two months of 2024.