

A RARE AND MOMENTOUS GATHERING OF FMA GRANDMASTERS

IN THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Last March 22, 2011 (Tuesday) at 2:00 p.m., Tanada Room, the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture joint with the Senate Committee on Games, Amusement and Sports conducted a public hearing, inquiring on the status on the implementation of Republic Act No. 9850 (Arnis Law) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Among the Senators present during the Public Hearing were Senator Gregorio B. Honasan II and Senator Juan Miguel F. Zubiri.



The meeting was a rare opportunity for various FMA Grandmasters here in the Philippines to gather together in one roof and share their opinions and views on how to propagate the art of arnis in the country in one direction and focus. Said Public Hearing was attended by Chairman Ricardo Garcia of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Captain Ricardo F. Sarte - President of the NARAPHIL, Master Hadji Tejada of the Department of Education - External Affairs, Grandmaster Efren Apresto – Founder of FAMAFF, Grandmaster Francisco Aycocho – Founder of Aycocho Martial Arts, Grandmaster Henry Burbano from Negros, Grandmaster Paulo Motita II – Chairman of IMAFP Sports Arnis, Grandmaster Rene Tongson of Philippine Classical Arnis International, Grandmaster Benson Fernandez of Negros Occidental, Grandmaster Ibarra Lopez of Negros, Grandmaster Mike Vasquez of Tapado, Grandmaster Samuel “Bambit” Dulay of International Modern Arnis Federation (IMAF), Grandmaster Jeremias Dela Cruz of Philippine Council Arnis – Arnis Cruzada Philippines, Deputy Grandmaster Patty Caballero of Lightning Scientific Arnis International (LSAI), Master Nico Palma – Secretary General of Lightning Scientific Arnis International (LSAI), Atty. Salvador Demaisip – President of International Modern Arnis Federation (IMAF), Grandmaster Rodel Dagooc of Arnis Association International, Inc. (AAIL), Grandmaster Jun I. Matagay – 10th Degree Redbelt Founder of Arku-Tai-Pa International, Master Ryan Gialogo of Kali Arnis Martial Arts Organization (KAMAO) and countless other arnisadors/escrimadors who came all the way from the provinces just to attend the Public Hearing.

Among the salient points and issues discussed during the Public Hearing were the following:

- There was a proposal to conduct an election of new officers of the National Sports Association (NSA) in Arnis in the Philippines. It was raised during the hearing the National Sports Association (NSA) in Arnis in the country needs new fresh blood and new sets of officers. The issue on transparency and accountability in the utilization and disbursement of the funds of the National Sports Association (NSA) in Arnis was raised during the hearing. Senator Zubiri stated that there is a need to make the NSA in Arnis trustworthy, transparent and credible.
- There was a proposal during the hearing to create a Technical Committee to formulate a standardized rules in the conduct of tournaments in the country and in international tournaments. Additionally, the issue on holding a standardized seminar to properly train and educate the officiating judges and referees in international tournaments was discussed during the hearing. One Grandmaster also raised the issue on the need to specifically define and standardized the Rules for Competitive Sporting Tournaments, and the Rules on Impact and Bladed Weapons.
- On the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9850 (Arnis Law), Chairman Ricardo Garcia of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) gave his firm commitment, together with the representative of the Department of Education (DepEd), that they will expedite the crafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) in order to effectively implement the mandate as envisioned in Arnis Law. The Senate will also form a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of technical staff and consultants in the art of arnis in order to assist the Philippine Sports Commission and the Department of Education in expediting the crafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulation of the Arnis Law.



- Senator Zubiri pointed out that there is a need to create and establish a One Unified National Organization of Filipino Martial Arts (FMA) that will compose the membership of all the kali/arnis/escrima styles in the country, a unified organization where all kali styles are welcome and included. Senator Zubiri added that the time has come for the country to unite all the arnis/kali/escrima groups into one roof where everyone is welcome and accepted as brothers and sisters in one family, and that no one particular style is marginalized or alienated.



- One Grandmaster pointed out that the proposed Unified National Organization of Arnis should focus on the three (3) key areas in the propagation of arnis, namely: (1) The Education Component of Arnis, which includes teaching the schoolchildren in the art of kali, its history and cultural heritage, (2) The Sports Component of Arnis, which focus on tournaments and events, (3) The Martial Arts Component of Arnis, which focus on the combative and deadly art of kali.
- There was also a proposal by one grandmaster to create and establish a National Institute of Arnis to be funded by the government. Said Institution will provide the curriculum and gather all the masters in the art kali to standardize the teaching of arnis/kali/escrima to students, and even to trainers and instructors (trainors' training). The National institute of Arnis is envisioned to standardized the training of trainors, referees and officiating judges in arnis tournaments.
- The public hearing was indeed a momentous and pivotal event because seldom can we gather as many grandmasters in art of Arnis/Kali/Escrima in one roof in order to discuss a common agenda to promote and propagate the art of arnis/kali/escrima, not only in the country but in the international arena. There was plenty of picture taking, socializing, and exchanging of calling cards and cellphone numbers after the hearing and the people who attended the hearing went home with a sense of pride in their hearts that, at last, our key leaders in the country is giving priority and importance in our indigenous art called "Arnis/Kali/Escrima".



MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!!!

NG LAHAT!!!

Jessie R. Rocales
Senate of the Philippines

