

March 25, 2026

Feature CRAG CARAGA 2026 REGIONAL ATHLETIC GAMES 2026

“Sana dito lagi ang regional meet”

Maria Ines C. Asuncion
Regional Director
DepEd Caraga



RD Asuncion Echoes Massive Public Appreciation of CRAG 2026 Hosting

By Public Affairs Unit
DepEd Caraga

There are moments in public gatherings when a single line captures the collective sentiment of everyone present. During the closing ceremony of the Caraga Regional Athletic Games (CRAG) 2026, that moment came when DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, CESO III, echoed what many had already been saying:

“Sana dito lagi ang regional meet.”

Spoken before a sea of athletes, coaches, parents, government officials, and spectators at the Surigao Provincial Sports Complex on March 20, the remark was not merely a compliment to the host province and city, it was an affirmation of a hosting that set a new benchmark for regional athletic meets.

A Standard Raised, A Community United

Director Asuncion’s message was grounded in gratitude, but it was also a recognition of excellence. She commended the leadership of the Province of Surigao del Norte and Surigao City for setting a high standard for hosting the games.

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Photo: Province of Surigao del Norte

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the superb hosting of the 2026 Caraga Regional Athletic Games. Your meticulous planning, excellent facilities, and unwavering dedication ensured that every athlete, coach, and official had a safe, memorable, and inspiring experience," she said.

She also praised the Surigaonon community for their warmth and hospitality:

"The genuine hospitality of the Surigaonon community made all participants feel at home, while the seamless execution of events highlighted your commitment to excellence. Through this gathering, you have not only celebrated athletic talent across the region, but also strengthened bonds among our provinces. Thank you for raising the bar for regional sports events, and for showcasing the best of Caraga's spirit and pride."

Director Asuncion underscored that what made this year's games exceptional was not only the athletic performances, but the spirit behind them, the quiet efficiency of organizers, the dedication of volunteers, and the genuine hospitality that made every guest feel at home. ➤ Page 3



Photo: Surigao City PIO



With hands raised, Surigao del Norte Governor Hon. Lyndon Barbers proudly accepts another challenge of hosting the 2027 edition of the Caragames. Also in the photo are Hon. Vice Mayor Alfonso S. Casurra (far left), DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, CESO III; Schools Division Superintendents Dr. Karen L. Galanida, CESO V (Surigao del Norte); Dr. Manuel O. Caberte (Siargao Islands), and Dr. Marilou B. Dedumo (Surigao City). Photos by Robert Pepe Jr.

Leadership at Every Level

The success of CRAG 2026, as highlighted by the Regional Director, was a product of coordinated leadership across sectors.

She expressed deep appreciation to Governor Lyndon Barbers, Vice Governor Geed Gokiangee, members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, provincial department heads, and municipal mayors, acknowledging their vital role in ensuring the success of the event. Special mention was given to Vanessa Dudduban for her professionalism in the planning and execution the games.

Equally recognized were Surigao City Mayor Paul Yves Dumlao II, Vice Mayor Alfonso Casurra, the city council, and the entire Surigao community, whose collective effort created an environment where athletes and delegates felt welcomed and valued. [▶ Page 4](#)





Within DepEd, Director Asuncion commended the leadership and involvement of Schools Division Offices, functional division chiefs, and delegation heads, emphasizing that their commitment fuels the aspirations of the region's youth.

She also acknowledged the support of DepEd Secretary Sonny Angara, represented by Undersecretary Malcolm Garma, along with Assistant Regional Director Pedro T. Escobarte Jr., and Regional Sports Coordinator Dr. Jumer C. Carlon, whose attention to detail ensured the smooth conduct of the games.

Behind the Scenes of Excellence

Beyond the spotlight, Director Asuncion gave recognition to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, including technical officials, tournament managers, adjudicators, line agency partners, private sector supporters, security forces, and civil society organizations.

Among them, the Bureau of Fire Protection earned special mention for the spectacular lighting of the urn, an emblematic moment that symbolized the unity and passion of the games.

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Photos: Rober Pepe Jr.

A Challenge to the Athletes

As the games ended, the focus shifted from celebration to aspiration.

Director Asuncion congratulated all athletes for their determination and achievements but reserved a special challenge for those who will advance to the 2026 Palarong Pambansa, urging them to aim higher.

With conviction, she called for a top three finish, directly appealing to the athletes' commitment and sense of purpose. It was a fitting conclusion, one that transformed victory into responsibility, and participation into a stepping stone for greater excellence.

More Than a Sporting Event

CRAG 2026 will be remembered not only for medals won, but for the standard it set. In Surigao, the games became a testament to what is possible when leadership aligns with community spirit, when organization meets passion, and when hospitality turns an event into an experience.

And perhaps that is why the words resonated so deeply: "Sana dito lagi ang regional meet."

Because for those who witnessed it, CRAG 2026 was not just another regional gathering, it was the one to live up to. **END**



Photos: Rober Pepe Jr.

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