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**The Entrepreneur**

### **World-Class**

Conclusion

GLOBAL media was abuzz last week—television, newspapers and even the Internet—and it was not because of any terrible accident or disaster or revolution: it was about the world's biggest pumpkin.

The United States, the world's biggest economy and the most powerful nation, claims with obvious pride that one of its farmers holds the world's record in pumpkins, or kalabasa, a daily fare in the local dinner table.

The 194th annual Topsfield Fair in Massachusetts made history when Ron Wallace of Rhode Island took the \$15,500 prize for his pumpkin, which weighed in at 2,009 pounds or a little over one ton.

I look at this piece of news as a reflection of the mental attitude of Americans, who have made great strides and continue to lead in many fields—from medicine to weaponry, from education to industrial production, from undersea to space exploration—the list goes on and on.

Yet, the US and its people still take pride in the achievements of its farmers. To me, that's competitive attitude: Americans think of themselves as competitive, globally—in short, world-class.

And that, I believe, should also be our attitude. Filipinos should no longer think of themselves as second- or third-rate people.

And we have the records to show we belong with the best in the world. For instance, the Philippine Azkals recently won the Philippine Football Peace Cup, the first time the country won an international football tournament since the 1913 Far Eastern Games.

We have world champions in boxing like Congressman Manny Pacquiao, Nonito Donaire and many others before them, plus rising stars,

Efren "Bata" Reyes, Django Bustamante and company have brought world titles and international fame to the Philippines and, at the same time, elevated billiards from an idle-time pastime to a respected, competitive sport.

The Philippines does not have the same long and colorful history in ballet, yet in June this year Candice Adea, a principal dancer of Ballet Philippines, won first prize in the senior women's division of the Helsinki International Ballet Competition, one of the world's most prestigious ballet competitions.

According to a news release from Ballet Philippines's web site, Adea competed against more than 60 dancers from 28 countries, including the United States, China, Japan, Finland, Canada, Italy and Cuba.

In August local media reported that Filipino students won a total of 125 medals—14 gold, 52 silver and 35 bronze medals—in the 8th Asia Cup Stars of the Olympic Math Contest 2012 held in Hong Kong.

The list of achievements of Filipinos in international events continues to stretch and I wonder: do we even have an achievement or honors list?

However, let me go back to the issue of competitiveness, particularly on the implications of the Philippines's ranking in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2012-2013 Global Competitiveness Report, which ranked the Philippines 65th among 144 economies, a big jump from No. 75 in the WEF rankings in 2011-2012.

It was the second year in a row that the Philippines climbed up the rankings by 10 rungs. Once grouped among the bottom 25 percent, the country has joined the top 50 percent of the world rankings, the first time since it was first included in the WEF rankings in 1994.

It's a commendable and significant achievement on a global basis, and it should encourage us not only to work harder at improving our ranking further but, more important, to cultivate a competitive attitude among all Filipinos.

This means encouraging competitions in education, sports, health care, arts, agriculture and in all fields of human endeavor, in addition to economic activities.

This also means pushing competitiveness not only in the government or among government agencies, but also in the private sector.

Let's all start looking at ourselves as world-class, but let's also start working to support and firm up that attitude, by developing a competitive culture.

If the US takes pride in having the biggest pumpkin as a world achievement with the same prestige as sending a space probe to Mars, why can't the Philippines claim honors in producing the sweetest mango, or for that matter, the largest bangus?

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