

Philippine Embassy in Athens Commemorates 115th Anniversary of Philippine Independence



Athens PE personnel during the diplomatic reception in commemoration of the 115th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence on 12 June 2013 at the Ledra Marriott Hotel.

The Philippine Embassy in Athens celebrated the 115th anniversary of Philippine independence on 12 June 2013 with a series of activities that highlighted some of the best aspects of Philippine culture.

The celebration started with a simple flag-raising ceremony at the Philippine Embassy grounds in the morning of 12 June.

Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre led Embassy officers and staff in singing “Lupang Hinirang,” followed by the recitation of the “Panunumpa sa Watawat,” and the reading of the messages of President Benigno S. Aquino III, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Albert F. Del Rosario and Secretary of Labor and Employment Rosalinda Baldoz.

(Continued on page 4)

Athens PE holds a lecture on “The Rights and Responsibilities of OFWs in Greece”

The Philippine Embassy in Athens, Greece in cooperation with M. Pavlakis- C. Moschos & Associates, represented by Atty. Ioannis M. Pavlakis and Atty. Christos I. Moschos, conducted a lecture on “The Rights and Responsibilities of Foreign Workers in Greece”, during the regular monthly meeting of the Embassy with members of the Filipino community on Saturday, 13 April 2013 at the Philippine Embassy.

The lecture is part of the Embassy’s continuing program to provide Filcom members with updates on issues and concerns that affect them.

The Pavlakis-Moschos law firm is familiar with the issues and concerns of Filipino workers in Greece, having represented many Filipinos for accident, compensation, and unpaid wages, among others.

Atty. Pavlakis also talked about the penalties involving crimes committed such as robbery, theft and possession and selling of illegal drugs.

Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre expressed his appreciation to the two lawyers for constantly providing support and cooperation with the Embassy. Ambassador Montealegre presented a plaque of appreciation to Atty. Pavlakis and Atty. Moschos.

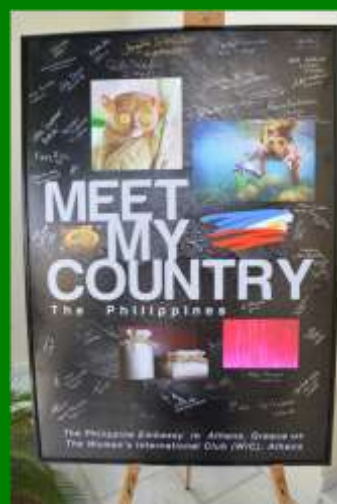
Around 60 Filcom members attended said meeting including Filcom leaders from the city of Thessaloniki islands of Kos, Crete, and Corfu. ■

DG De Lima meets with Senior Greek Gov’t Officials and Business Leaders

Dr. Lilia B. De Lima, Director General of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) and Undersecretary for Trade and Investment, together with Philippine Ambassador to Greece, H.E. Meynardo LB. Montealegre, met with H.E. Theodoros Karaoglou, Minister of Macedonia and Thrace, Mrs. Magda Karakoli, Alternate Secretary General for International Economic Relations in Thessaloniki, Mr. Dimitrios Bakatselos, President of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, H.E. Notis Mitarachi, Deputy Minister for Develop-

(Continued on page 2)

Athens PE Hosts the WIC of Athens with Meet My Country: the Philippines to Celebrate National Heritage Month



Philippine Embassy in Athens hosted the **Women’s International Club (WIC) of Athens** with *Meet My Country: The Philippines* on Wednesday, 29 May 2013, at the residence of Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre. More than 30 lady members of WIC, a **number of whom are Ambassadors’ spouses**, spouses of Greek government officials and business people, as well as key personalities in the Greek cultural and social strata attended the **event, which coincided with the Embassy’s observance of National Heritage Month.**

Meet My Country is among the important regular activities of the WIC, where the group invites an Embassy to present its country and highlight various aspects of its culture. Meet My Country: The Philippines is also part of a series of activities being undertaken in

One of the posters specially designed for the “Meet My Country” event with the signatures of the WIC ladies.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 1)... DG De Lima

ment, Mr. Syngros M. Aristomenis, Chairman of Invest in Greece Agency, H.E. Dimitris Kourkoulas, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Constantine Michalos, President of the Athens

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, during Director-General De Lima's visit to Greece from 13 to 15 February 2013. Dr. De Lima visited Greece upon the invitation of the Philippine Ambassador to Greece as part of the Embassy's economic diplomacy program. The visit was the first from a senior Philippine economic official since bilateral relations between the two countries began in 1950. Dr. De Lima and her counterparts noted that bilateral relations between

the Philippines and Greece are excellent, but there are rooms for growth in the area of economic cooperation.

In her meetings, Dr. De Lima informed her counterparts of the positive developments in the Philippine economy brought about by President Benigno S. Aquino's "daang matuwid" policy of transparency, accountability, and good governance. PEZA alone experienced an increase in investments by 32% since President Aquino assumed office in 2010.

As a result of Dr. De Lima's visit, the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce and the Filipino-Hellenic



From Left: Mr. Constantine Michalos, President of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Director General De Lima, Ambassador Montealegre, and Mr. Nikos Sofianos, Secretary-General of ACCI, 15 February 2013

Chamber for Business and Commerce agreed to work towards organizing a trade mission to the Philippines. ■

Business Forum on the Philippines Held in Thessaloniki



From left: Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre, Philippine Honorary Consul Nikolaos Margaropoulos, Director General Lilia B. De Lima, Mr. Yorgos Psinakis, and Mr. Nick Gitsis.

A Business Forum on the Philippines, co-organized by the Philippine Embassy in Athens, the Philippine Honorary Consulate in Thessaloniki, and the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce, was held in Thessaloniki on 13 February 2013. Dr. Lilia B. De Lima, Director General of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and Undersecretary for Trade and Industry, was the keynote speaker in the said event, which was attended by representatives of more than thirty-five (35) companies in Northern Greece.

Aside from Dr. De Lima, the panel of speakers was comprised of H.E. Meynardo LB. Montealegre, Philippine Ambassador to Greece, Mr. Dimitris Bakatselos, President of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce, Atty. Nikolaos Margaropoulos, Philippine Honorary Consul in Thessaloniki, Mr. Yorgos Psinakis, Founding Member of the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce, and Mr. Nikos Gitsis, Founder of the Filipino-Hellenic Chamber for Business and Commerce.

In her keynote address, Director-General De Lima stated that opportunities can be found in times of crises. She stressed that

the participants should invest in the Philippines because of its world-class workforce, which are literate, English-speaking, and easily trainable; its business-friendly policies; and its strategic location in the Asia Pacific.

Ambassador Montealegre, in his remarks, highlighted the fact that after sixteen years, the Philippines has long gotten past the Asian financial crisis and is stronger than ever. He also stated that the country is enjoying a resurgence in business confidence brought about by the transformational leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III and his commitment to transparency, accountability and good governance.

Mr. Psinakis and Mr. Gitsis closed the Forum by inviting Greek businessmen to consider the Philippines as an investment destination for its political stability, highly-skilled people, and beautiful islands. They also offered the services of their Chambers of Business and Commerce in organizing business missions to the Philippines and conducting business-matching, among others. ■

Athens PE Hosts Greek Businessmen at the Athens Club

Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre hosted a business luncheon for PEZA Director-General Lilia B. De Lima and a group of Greek businesspeople at the prestigious Athens Club on 15 February 2013. DG De Lima visited Greece on 12 -16 February 2013 to help promote the Philippines as an attractive investment/business destination. Among the guests were members of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other Greek businessmen from various sectors, i.e. IT/call centers, manufacturing, shipping, mining, publishing, etc., together with Mr. Yorgos Psinakis, founding member of the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce and Mr. Nick Gitsis, head of Filipino-Hellenic Chamber for Business and Commerce. Both chambers agreed to assist in linking Greek and Filipino businessmen in further exploring business opportunities in the Philippines. ■



Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre and Director-General Lilia b. De Lima during the roundtable discussion at a luncheon hosted by the Philippine Embassy on 15 February 2013 at the Athens Club.

Q & A on the UNCLOS Arbitral Proceedings Against China to Achieve a Peaceful and Durable Solution to the Dispute in the West Philippine Sea

1. Why are we bringing China to an arbitral tribunal?

China's 9-dash line claim encompasses practically the entire West Philippine Sea (WPS). We must challenge the unlawful claim of China under their 9-dash line in order to protect our national territory and maritime domain.

2. Why do we have to do this now?

Having exhausted all possible initiatives, we feel the time to act is now. If we do not act now, we will be in default.

3. What is the basis of our legal action?

The legal action is pursuant to the President's constitutional mandate to pursue the national interest and defend the Philippine territory and maritime domain. It also pursues the policy of a rules-based approach based on international law, especially UNCLOS, in resolving the disputes in the WPS.

4. What do we expect from this arbitral tribunal?

We hope that the arbitral tribunal will issue an award in accordance with international law that will direct China to respect our sovereign rights and jurisdiction over our EEZ, continental shelf, contiguous zone, and territorial sea over the West Philippine Sea, and to desist from undertaking unlawful acts that violate our rights.

5. What is the process of arbitration?

Under Annex VII of UNCLOS, the arbitration process begins by notifying the other party to the dispute and giving a statement of facts on which the notification is based.

In accordance with this process, the Philippines through the DFA handed the Note Verbale to the Chinese Ambassador in Manila in the afternoon of 22 January 2013 notifying China that the Philippines is bringing the dispute in the WPS before an arbitral tribunal under Annex VII of UNCLOS.

The next step is to form the 5-member arbitration panel. When the panel is formed, the parties will present their documents to further explain their case.

6. Is the legal track the only option?

We have adopted three tracks in terms of the political, diplomatic and legal approaches. At this stage, the legal track presents the most durable option to defend the national interest and territory on the basis of international law.

7. Who filed the case and where?

The Philippines filed the arbitration case against China. The parties will have to agree on the place where the arbitral tribunal will hold the hearing of the case.

Under UNCLOS, Parties to a dispute have the choice on where to file the case, either in the International Court of Justice, ITLOS, arbitral tribunal and special arbitral tribunal. The Philippines chose to bring this case before the arbitral tribunal because it believes it is the appropriate body to hear the complaint of the Philippines against China.

8. How long will the arbitration process last?

Based on the cases so far handled by international tribunals on maritime disputes, the case would take 3-4 years.

9. Will we win our case?

We believe we have a very good case under international law. In any legal action, however, there are many different factors to consider. What is more important is that we are able to present our case against China and defend our national interest and maritime domain before an independent international tribunal. We expect international law to be the great equalizer.

10. Who are the members of the PH legal team?

Solicitor General Francis H. Jardeleza is the agent or the legal representative of the Philippines in this arbitration case. Mr. Paul Reichler of the Washington law firm Foley and Hoag is the lead counsel.

11. Why are the other countries not filing a case against China?

The Philippines is taking action based on its national interest and not on the actions or non-action of other countries.

12. What if China refuses to participate in the arbitration?

The Philippines will pursue the procedures and remedies available under Annex VII of UNCLOS to achieve the award outlined in the Statement of Claim.

Annex VII of UNCLOS provides for compulsory proceedings with binding decision.

13. **What's next for the Philippines?**

The Philippines will now prepare for the formation of the 5-member arbitration panel and agree on the venue.

14. Do you have the support of the other branches of the government?

Yes, all the three branches of the Philippine Government support the President's decision to bring the dispute in the West Philippine Sea before the UNCLOS arbitral tribunal.

15. What will be the effects on Philippines-China economic relations?

As arbitration is friendly and peaceful, we hope that there will be no adverse effects on our trade with China. President Aquino and President Hu Jintao agreed that the bilateral agenda will be moved forward while contentious issues will be abstracted for separate treatment.

We are all for improving our economic relations with China but it should not be at the expense of surrendering our national sovereignty.

16. What will be the effects on tourism?

The Philippines and China have an incredible people-to-people engagement. We look forward to enhance it through an effective tourism program.

17. What will happen to our OFWs who may be affected by this action?

The Philippine Government will provide the appropriate safety net for the OFWs.

18. Did the US and Japan influence your decision to take this action?

No. The Philippines is taking this action independently.

19. What are the opinions of the different sectors in Philippine society?

While there are varied opinions on the dispute, nevertheless, all Filipinos should unite to support **the President's constitutional mandate to protect Philippine territory and national interest.**

20. Will this result into a military conflict?

China is a good friend. Arbitration is a peaceful and amicable process to settle a dispute between and among friends.

21. What will happen to PH-China relations?

We will continue to pursue an enhancement of our bilateral relations in all areas of cooperation.

22. Would this action affect ASEAN?

We are counting on ASEAN to support us in finding a peaceful and durable solution to the dispute. The Philippines must protect its own national interest in this regional forum as well as in other fora in order to enhance the respect of our international partners who support our cause.

23. Would discussions on the Code of Conduct (CoC) continue?

Yes, the Philippines will continue to work with ASEAN and China in crafting the Code of Conduct and implement the commitments of ASEAN Member States and China in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

24. Why can we not do joint development with China?

Joint development, following the Chinese model, is a violation of the Philippine Constitution. Joint development should be in accordance with Philippine law.

25. How much will this cost the Filipino people?

One cannot put a price in the concerted effort of the Filipino people and government in defending our patrimony, territory, national interest and national honor.

26. Why should the Filipinos support this action?

If someone forces himself into your house and tries to unlawfully take away what belongs to you, should you not take action against the intruder? Our action is in defense of our national territory and maritime domain.

27. How can all Filipinos help in promoting a positive result of this legal initiative?

All Filipinos should stand behind the President to defend what is ours in accordance with the Philippine Constitution. We should all firmly demonstrate our patriotism. We should all stand united as one **before the whole world to manifest the President's leadership** on this issue.

Diplomatic reception

(Continued from page 1).... Athens PE celebrates

In the evening of the same day, some 200 guests from the diplomatic community, the host government, maritime/shipping industry, the business sector, the academe, research institutions and think tanks, and Filipino community leaders in Greece attended the diplomatic reception at the Athens Ledra Marriott Hotel.

In his remarks, Ambassador Montealegre recalled the events on 12 June 1898 that led to the birth of the Philippine Republic, and reflected on the sacrifices made by great Filipino patriots

in order that future generations of Filipinos may live in a free and unfettered society. He saluted Filipinos in Greece and in all parts of the world for the recognition and respect they have attained in the eyes of the global community for their competence, dedication, hard work, and genuine care and concern for others.

In line with this year's theme, "Kalayaan 2013: Ambagan Tungo sa Malawakang Kaunlaran," the Ambassador emphasized the role that all Filipinos play in creating a stronger and stable republic. "Each one is called to contribute towards building a better Philippines, where growth is sustainable, and where the fruits of

progress are shared by all, ensuring that no one is left behind," he added.

The Ambassador also cited the positive developments that have been happening to the Philippines, including its 7.8-percent GDP growth rate in the first quarter of 2013, making it the fastest growing economy in Asia, the investment grade ratings it received from credit-rating firms Fitch and Standard and Poor's and upgraded rating from the Japan Credit Rating Agency, and that personal remittances from overseas Filipino workers reached an all-time high of US\$23.8 billion in 2012. ■



(From left to right) Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre together with Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Argentine Amb. Jorge Mastropietro; US Ambassador and Mrs. Daniel Bennett Smith; Indonesian Ambassador and Mrs. Benny Bahanadewa; Amb. Montealegre delivering his short message at the diplomatic reception held on 12 June 2013 at Ledra Marriot Hotel.



(Clockwise) "Sigay, Pilak at Habi" (shells, silver, and woven crafts) exhibit; Rice Kipping (Rice wafer) chandelier from Quezon Province ; and Officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy in front of the "Meet My Country Posters."

More photos on page 7.

KALAYAAN 2012

Athens PE Celebrates Philippine Independence Day with the Filcom

The Philippine Embassy together with the Filipino community in Athens held a whole-day outdoor celebration of the 115th Anniversary of Philippine Independence on 23 June 2013 at the Fokianos National Gymnasium in Zappio, Athens.

The celebration kicked-off with a parade led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre and the Embassy staff and participated in by 38 various Filipino community associations dressed in their Filipiniana attire. This was followed by a "balik tanaw" re-enactment of the events that led to the proclamation of the Philippine Independence in Kawit, Cavite, leading up to the singing of the national anthem. Ambassador Montealegre, Consul General Charmaine Rowena Aviquivil and POLO OIC and Welfare Officer

Leonor Mabagal read the Independence Day messages of President Benigno S. Aquino III, SFA Albert Del Rosario and Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz respectively.

The Embassy personnel capped off the morning program by serenading the Filcom with "Pipit" and "Isang Mundo," which were well-received by the audience.

The afternoon program began with the presentation of regional dresses from selected members of the Filipino community. Different associations delighted the audience with cultural presentations such as Cordillera Ethnic Dance, Malong Dance, Pantomina, Bulaklakan, Kuratsa and others, singing of Filipino folk and modern songs and Modern Arnis Exhibition.

The Filipino community and foreign

guests had their pick of Filipino dishes and refreshments such as barbecue, dinuguan, lumpia, pancit, various kakanin, sago't gulaman and halo halo, and Philippine made products from over 50 booths.

Overseas Welfare Workers Administration (OWWA) and Pag-ibig Fund also had booths providing services to the Filipino community. The Embassy booth showcased its colorful "Meet My Country," posters which attracted the attention of Greek visitors and Filipinos alike.

A tourism pavilion showcasing different tourist spots in the Philippines was set-up by the Filipino community members as an added attraction for tourists during the event. ■

Below are some photos taken during the event.



Athens PE Commemorates the 46th Anniversary of the ASEAN

The Philippine Embassy in Athens, Greece commemorated the "ASEAN Week," by conducting a flag raising ceremony of the ASEAN flag alongside the Philippine flag on 07 August 2013. The raising of the ASEAN Flag, accompanied by the ASEAN Hymn, followed the raising of the Philippine Flag. The flag raising ceremony was followed by "Panunumpa ng Katapatan sa Watawat."

Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre gave a brief speech focusing on the relevance of ASEAN then and now. From a political association, the regional grouping through the years grew stronger and developed into a more people-oriented regional organization with two additional community pillars --- the Economic Community and the Socio-Cultural Community.



Athens PE personnel at the flag raising ceremony during the ASEAN Week celebration held at the Embassy grounds.

Ambassador Montealegre stressed that ASEAN remains significant today, especially to the Philippines. All ASEAN Member States are working to draft a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in order to help maintain peace and security in the region.

From 29 to 30 June 2013, the four ASEAN Member States with diplomatic missions in Greece (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) commemorated the 46th Anniversary of ASEAN through a two-day ASEAN Bowling Tournament and Fun Games. The Philippine Embassy won first place in the bowling tournament, tug-of-war, and children's games. The Philippines also won third place in the individual sack race event, where Indonesia won first and second place. ■

Athens PE holds Month-Long Elections for Overseas Voters

Athens PE opened the Embassy to registered Filipino Overseas Voters to cast their votes for the senatorial/party list election from 13 April 2013 to 13 May 2013.

A total of 1,158 Overseas Voters cast their votes during this period. ■

DLSU Chorale Wins Awards in Greece



The De La Salle University Chorale won the Gold Medal and First Prize under the Chamber Choir Category in the International Choir Festival "Antonio Vivaldi" held from 27 June to 01 July 2013 at Karpenissi, Greece and the Gold Medal and First Prize under the Chamber Choir Category in the "International Choral Competition of Sacred Music" held from 04 to 07 July in Preveza, Greece.

The DLSU Chorale headed by Professor Rodolfo F. Delarmente, the musical director, called on Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre in Athens on 11 July 2013 at the Embassy. The group is composed of 17 student members of the DLSU. During the call, the DLSU Choir serenaded the Embassy officials with folk, ethnic and popular songs.

The DLSU Chorale performed for the members of the Filipino community at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. They also performed during the Greek mass at the St. Denis Roman Catholic Church on 12 July 2013. Both performances were coordinated by the members of the Filipino community. ■

Athens PE and Filcom Members Celebrate the National Year of Rice

The Philippine Embassy in Athens together with the Filipino Community members in the Athens, Greece celebrated the National Year of Rice on 09 March 2013 at the Embassy grounds.

During the Embassy's third regular Filcom meeting, the Embassy presented a power point presentation on the National Year of Rice from the latter's website, portion of the SONA of the President on the goal to reach rice self-sufficiency, NYR briefer, facts about rice, and reminder on how the Filipinos could contribute to their country in achieving rice self sufficiency.

The Embassy personnel and the Filcom members also feasted on rice-based products like biko, bibingka, suman, palitaw, etc., prepared by the Embassy and Filcom members to celebrate the event.

Embassy Personnel recited the Panatang Makapalay after its regular flag raising ceremony on 11 March 2013 held at the Embassy.

Athens PE also uploaded to its website and posted at the consular section the tarpaulin design and campaign facts of the NYR for the information of our kababayans.

For more information please visit <http://www.nyr2013.com>. ■

Athens PE hosts the screening of Filipino films "Emir" & "Donsol"

The Philippine Embassy in Athens, in cooperation with the Film Development Council of the Philippines, hosted two Filipino film screenings of "Emir" and "Donsol".

Athens PE hosted the screening of "Emir" on 13 July 2013 at the Philippine Embassy.

The members of the Filipino community enjoyed watching the movie. They were also touched by the story of Amelia.

On 03 July, Athens PE together with the Independent Science and Technology (IST) College, hosted the film screening of "Donsol" at IST College in Athens.



Screening of "Donsol" at IST College.

The film screening was attended by guests from the diplomatic corps, the academe, and the Greek private sector. Some Filipino community members from Bicol, the film's location, also attended the screening.

A simple reception preceded the film showing, where guests were treated to Filipino dishes and desserts such as adobo flakes, beef embutido balls, puto, fruit salad, and Philippine mango juice. ■

Athens PE Celebrates 27th Anniversary of EDSA People Power Revolution

The officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy together with the Filipino community members in Athens commemorated the 27th Anniversary of EDSA People Power Revolution on 25 February 2013 at the premises of the Embassy.

A flag raising ceremony led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre started the morning program, followed by the "Panunumpa ng Katapatan sa Watawat". After the ceremony, the Ambassador delivered a brief message on the Philippines' legacy to the world: that change can be attained without bloodshed.

As part of the evening program, Post showed the video of President Aquino's speech delivered during the 27th anniversary of the EDSA People Power Revolution at the EDSA People Power Monument, followed by a film showing of "Puso at Diwa ni Ninoy" at 6:00 p.m. at the Embassy. ■

The Philippine Embassy welcomes



Mr. Evan P. Abayon, who arrived in Athens on 26 December 2012 to assume his duty as the Administrative Officer, Signing Officer and Attaché, replacing Mr. Hermogenes Garcia.

Mr. Abayon joined the Department in 1991. Prior to his posting in Athens, he was cross-posted from the Philippine Embassy in Lisbon and was previously assigned in Bangkok, Thailand.

He served in the Department's Office of Consular Affairs from 1991 to 1995 and Office of the Asia and Pacific Affairs from 1996 to 2001.

Mr. Abayon is a B.S. Foreign Service graduate from the Lyceum of the Philippines. ■



Mr. Solomon E. Balmeo, who arrived in Athens on 06 January 2013 to assume his duty as the Communications, Protocol, Property, Records Officer and Attaché, replacing Mr. Nestor Magallones.

Mr. Balmeo joined the Department in 1978. Prior to his posting in Athens, he was assigned at the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, Hanoi, Vietnam and Tehran, Iran.

He served in the Department's CORATEL and Office of the Secretary.

Mr. Balmeo is married to Lolita Bergantinos and they have four children. ■



Ms. Liwayway Ferrer, who arrived in Athens on 05 July 2013 to assume her duty as Administrative Assistant of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, replacing Mr. Christopher Prado.

As an Administrative Assistant, Ms. Ferrer assists Welfare Officer Leonor Mabagal in the promotion of social protection and welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers in Greece.

Ms. Ferrer attained a degree in Bachelor in Business Education major in Business and Distributed Arts at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Ms. Ferrer is from Manila. ■

and bids farewell to ...



Mr. Nestor Magallones, who ended his tour of duty as the Communications, Protocol, Property, Records Officer and Attaché in August 2012.

He was previously assigned at the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, Hanoi, Vietnam and Tehran, Iran. ■



Mr. Hermogenes Garcia, who ended his tour of duty as the Administrative Officer, Signing Officer and Attaché on October 2012.

He was previously assigned at the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo and at the Philippine Consulate in Los Angeles, USA. ■



Labor Attache Romulo Salud, who ended his tour of duty as Labor Attache to Greece in March 2013. Labatt Salud was previously assigned in Cyprus and in Hong Kong SAR. ■



Mr. Christopher Prado ended his tour of duty as Administrative Assistant of POLO-Greece on July 2013. Mr. Prado attained a degree in Bachelor of Science major in Management. ■

More photos during the Diplomatic reception



(From left to right) Ambassador Montealegre together Philippine Honorary Consul in Crete, Mr. and Mrs. Alexandros Fasoulakis; with Philippine Honorary Consul in Patras Mrs. Anastasia Manalopoulou; and with some of the members of the Filipino community.



(From left to right) The 2013 Philippine Independence Day Posters and bookmarks which were given away to the guests during the event.

Community News

We welcome Pinoy news!

Send us your letters, news stories, press or photo releases for publication in the newsletter via regular mail, e-mail.



Accredited Community Partners' SSS Membership drive. Ambassador Montealegre welcomes SSS Milan Representative Thelma Villanueva-Venturanza during the ACP's initiative to facilitate registration and reactivation of the SSS memberships of the Filipino community in Greece which was held on 28 April 2013 at the Philippine Embassy. More than a hundred OFWs attended the event.



Filipino Bowlers in Athens Greece's Sportsfest and Band Concert. Ambassador Meynardo Montealegre delivering his message during the event of FILBAG which was held on 21 April 2013 at Fokianos Gymnasium.



Athens PE Easter Monday Mass Sponsorship. Officers and staff of the Embassy together with Sr. Emma Rivero and Rev. Fr. Rhodel Nacional C.M. which was held on 29 April 2013 at the Miraculous Medal Center in Patission.

Free Greek Language Lessons for Filcom in Heraklion, Crete



HonCon Alexandros Fasoulakis together with Greek teacher Ms. Karamato awarding the certificates to the graduates.

The Philippine Honorary Consul in Crete, Greece, Mr. Alexandros Fasoulakis, in coordination with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning of the Municipality of Heraklion and the office of the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Heraklion, initiated Greek language lessons free of charge, for the Filipino community members in Heraklion.

Classes were held from January to June 2013 at the 9th Elementary School at Heraklion, with around 31 Filipinos in attendance.

During the graduation, which was held on 4 August 2013 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Heraklion, Crete, HonCon Fasoulakis and Ms. Eleni Karamato, Greek teacher presented the certificates to the 19 graduates.

Greek language for Filipinos in Crete was among the activities identified by the PHC and the Philippine Embassy in Athens to help OFWs in their day-to-day activities in Greece. ■



KASAPI, Munting Nayon & DIWATA's Santacruzán-Flores de Mayo Festival. Amb. Montealegre delivers his message to the Filcom members during the Santacruzán event held on 26 May 2013 at the Fokianos Gymnasium.



Bagong Kapwa Ko Pilipino sa Athens Greece's Anniversary and Induction. Consul General Charmaine Rowena Aviquivil inducts the newly elected officers of BKKPAO held on 08 June 2013 at the President Hotel.



(left to right) KAPHILCA PHILIPPINE SCHOOL IN GREECE (PSG) 2013 Commencement Exercises. Dr. Yolanda Quijano, former Undersecretary of the Department of Education, as the Commencement Guest Speaker delivers her message to the graduates of the KAPHILCA-PSG during the commencement exercise held on 29 June 2013 at Danaos Theater; Amb. Montealegre swears in the newly elected members of the Board of Trustees of KAPHILCA-PSG held on 12 July 2013 at the Philippine Embassy.



The new location of the KAPHILCA-PSG is at Thimatón Polemou 15 Kareas, Vyronas.
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Continued from page 1)... Meet My Country



Samples of "Meet My Country" brochure

Ong's modern Filipiniana tops made from banana fabric during an impromptu demonstration on how these could be worn in different ways.

Embassy staff and family members serenaded the WIC ladies with a rendition of classic and contemporary Filipino musical numbers such as the folk ballad "Anak," OPM love songs "Hanggang" and "Kahit Isang Saglit," the



Embassy personnel serenading the WIC ladies with two Filipino songs.

bassy's economic and cultural diplomacy program.

Through Meet My Country, the Embassy provided a virtual tour of the Philippines and showcased the very best of the country's rich cultural heritage, specifically, furniture and home furnishing; fashion wear, accessories and indigenous fabric, fiestas, food, music and visual arts.

The WIC ladies were given a glimpse of the country's tourist attractions and were enticed to visit the Philippines with videos of the catchy "It's More Fun in the Philippines" and El Gamma Penumbra's creative shadow performance of "Piliin mo ang Pilipinas." The Ambassador



Rice Kiping (Rice Wafer) from Quezon

occasion were also displayed and distributed during the event.

For lunch, the ladies were led to the garden which evoked a fiesta atmosphere with colorful kiping decorations, which came all the way from Lucban, Quezon. They enjoyed tasting Filipino cuisine which included beef longaniza balls, siopao, spring rolls, palabok rolls, and laing artfully presented as starters, main courses of pancit sotanghon, chicken adobo, ginataang kalabasa at sitaw, and arroz caldo, and Filipino sweets and delicacies such as suman, puto, sapin-sapin, pichi-pichi, and halo-halo. They also sampled other Filipino pica-pica and snack items such as dried mangoes, pastillas, uraro cookies, polvoron, banana chips and



Ambassador Montealegre together with Mrs. Anthea Gavoyannis, WIC President (left) and Mrs. Christina Butler, Activities Officer.

folk song "Ang Pipit," and the Metro Pop festival winner, "Isang Mundo, Isang Awit."

The ladies toured the residence and were impressed at the fine craftsmanship of Filipino furniture which blends antique wood such as



The WIC ladies enjoying the delectable Filipino cuisine prepared by Chef Mandy Salonga.

presented a profile of the Philippines and briefly discussed its history, politics and government, economy, people and society.

The WIC ladies expressed keen interest in the Filipiniana attire worn by the Embassy officers and staff, who took the opportunity to describe the style and design of their Barong Tagalog, Maria Clara, mestiza dress, kimona and baro't saya, the delicate fabric used such as piña, jusi, abaca and banana and the hand-embroidered details of each attire. A number of the ladies gamely agreed to model Dita Sandico



Piña, tinalak, sinamay, inabel, banana and silk

molave, kamagong and narra, with indigenous materials and modern designs, with emphasis on style, comfort and functionality. They marveled at the exhibit of indigenous fabric and woven textiles such as sinamay, t'nalak, and inabel, and accessories with intricate ethnic and modern designs, which were strategically displayed as one enters and exits the residence. They also closely examined the Ambassador's collection of paintings made by Filipino contemporary artists such as Manuel Baldemor, Emmanuel Garibay, Edmund Bendijo, Aris

pili tarts.

The WIC members were presented with freshwater pearl earrings which they appreciated.

The WIC ladies gave glowing comments on all aspects of the event, and enthusiastically expressed their admiration for the Philippines' rich cultural heritage. They all said that they will never forget the amazing, one-of-a-kind experience they had at Meet My Country: The Philippines. A participant said, "Thank you for the very interesting presentation you gave us about your wonderful country, which I already decided to visit soon! I enjoyed your food and your lovely smiles!!!"

Consular Updates

ANNOUNCEMENT

The general public is advised that the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs now requires that Philippine public documents that have to be presented in the territory of the Hellenic Republic should henceforth be legalized exclusively by the competent Hellenic Consular authorities in the Philippines (i.e. Greek Embassy in Manila). Thank you.

R. A. 9225 (Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003)

The Embassy of the Philippines in Athens wishes to inform the general public that natural-born Filipinos who have lost their Filipino citizenship through naturalization in a foreign country, have the opportunity to retain or re-acquire their Filipino citizenship through R. A. 9225 (Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003).

According to Section 4 of R.A. 9225

(Derivative Citizenship), the unmarried children, whether legitimate, illegitimate or adopted, below eighteen (18) years of age, of those who re-acquire Philippine citizenship under this Act shall also be deemed citizens of the Philippines.

Under the act, Filipinos who re-acquire or retain Filipino citizenship may once again enjoy full civil, economic and political rights under existing laws of the Philippines. ■

Pasuguan ng Pilipinas sa Gresya Nagdiwang ng Buwan ng Wika



Ang mga kawani ng Pasuguan ng Pilipinas sa Gresya kasama ang mga miyembro ng komunidad ng Pilipino sa Athina sa pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Wika noong ika 7 ng Agosto 2013 sa Pasuguan.

Ang Pasuguan ng Pilipinas sa Gresya ay nagdiwang ng Buwan ng Wikang Pambansa noong ika-7 ng Agosto 2013 sa loob ng Pasuguan.

Nagsimula ang programa sa pagtaas ng bandila ng Pilipinas at panunumpa sa watawat. Sumunod dito ang isang maikling mensahe ni Ambasador Meynardo LB. Montealegre.

Ang programa para sa buong araw ay inilaan ng Pasuguan para sa mga kabataang Pilipino. Layunin ng Pasuguan ang magbahagi ng kaalaman sa mga kabataang Pilipino sa Gresya ukol sa Wikang Pambansa at paggamit ng sariling wika. May dalawampu't dalawang (22) bata mula apat (4) hanggang labindalawang (12) gulang na lumahok sa programa, na karamihan ay anak ng mga Filipino sa Gresya.

Sa umaga ay natutunan ng mga bata ang mga larong lahi gaya ng luksong tinik, pitik bulag, tumbang preso, saw-

saw suka, jack en poy, jackstone, at pabitin. Ang mga nanalo ay binigyan ng mga medalya at mga produktong pinoy. May mga premyo ring binigay sa mga di pinalad na manalo.

Matapos ang palaro ay tinuruan naman ang mga bata ng mga pambatang awit tulad ng Bahay Kubo, Paa-Tuhod, Kung Ikaw ay Masaya, at Tong Tong Tong Pakitong-kitong. Nananghalian ang mga bata ng *spaghetti pinoy style* at lechon manok na siyang patok na patok sa kanila.

Ang programa sa hapon ay sinimulan sa pagbabasa ng mga maiikling kwentong pambata tulad ng Tiktaktok at Pikpakbum, Isang Mayang Uwak, at Si Hinlalaki. Inakto ng mga kawani ng Pasuguan ang mga kwentong binasa na siyang kinatuwa ng mga bata. Matapos ang kwentuhan, nagkaroon ng palitan ng mga katanungan at kasagutan ukol sa mga kwentong binasa. Natapos ang araw sa paggawa ng bandila ng Pilipinas at pagturo ng tamang pag-awit ng Lupang Hinirang.

Natuwa ang mga bata gayundin ang kanilang mga magulang sa programang inihanda ng Pasuguan. ■



Luksong Tinik



Tumbang Preso



Si Ambasador Montealegre na nagkakaloob ng mga medalya sa mga nanalong kalahok.

LABOR PAGE



Free Medical Health Screening for OFWs in Thessaloniki, Greece in celebration of 2013 Migrant Workers' Day held on 10 June 2013

POLO in Action



POLO-OWWA organizes Savings and Investment Forum for OFWs in Greece held on 02 June 2013 at the President Hotel; Mr. Jomar Cortez, Manager of RCBC-Athens as one of the resource speakers.



(left to right) Ambassador Meynardo L.B. Montealegre delivers his inspirational message to the graduates of POLO-OWWA's Skills Enhancement Training for winter session 2013 held on 2 June at the President Hotel; Awarding of certificates; The graduates of Care giving, Greek Language and Computer Class.

16 Stranded Seafarers Repatriated



ATN Officer Claire Bonabon-Dankers, extreme left and Welfare Officer Leonor C. Mabagal, 3rd from right, pose with the last batch of repatriated Filipino Seafarers of Ikarian Moon Shipping Co. Ltd at Athens International Airport on April 24, 2013).

After a-month long negotiation of Post with Epsilon Maritime Agency Ltd. Hellas, the sixteen (16) stranded Filipino Seafarers on board four (4) Greek-owned cargo vessels (M/V NICOLAOS M, M/V GIANNES M, M/V TRIANTAFYLLOS M and M/V ARGYRO M) of the bankrupt Ikarian Moon Shipping Co. Ltd. were finally repatriated following successful settlement of their unpaid salaries for 8 months. They were separately stranded for 5 months in the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki, Greece and Malta together with other foreign national crew.

The last batch of repatriated crew on board M/V Nicolaos M based in Piraeus Port have expressed gratitude to the Philippine government for the assistance and support extended them, in behalf of all stranded crew. ■

Starting 01 September 2013, the office of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) will be located at 10 Fthiotidos St. Ambelokipi Athens, Greece 11523 The contact details are as follows: Tel. No.: 210 698 3335; Email address: pologreece@yahoo.com

Sumali sa Pag-IBIG Fund OFW Member DAGDAG IPON RAFFLE PROMO
 at manalo ng **US\$10,000.00**
 at iba pang premyo tulad ng gadgets at vacation packages

Mechanics :

- The promo is open to all qualified Pag-IBIG OFW members who will remit a minimum member's savings (MS) of P300.00 (single remittance). Upgraded contributions of housing loan borrowers are not included in the raffle promo.
- The Member shall be entitled to one raffle entry for every P300.00 (member's savings) MS remitted. For single transaction of more than P300.00 remittance shall be entitled to one raffle entry for every P300.00, i.e. four (4) raffle entries for P1,200.00; three (3) raffle entries for P1,500.00.
- To join the raffle, the Member should do the following steps:
 - STEP 1:** Remit the required P300.00 minimum member's savings (MS) to any Pag-IBIG Fund branch, overseas desk, or accredited remittance partner abroad.
 - STEP 2:** Visit www.pagibigfund.gov.ph and click the **Playa Working Abroad**
 - STEP 3:** Click the "Join the raffle promo!" link and enter the following information:
 - FIRST NAME
 - LAST NAME
 - Pag-IBIG ID/ POP Temporary ID# Registration/Tracking Number
 - MS# rem

Click the **VALIDATE** button.

Clicking the button will validate the information provided. This will validate the email address the OFW Member has indicated when he/she registered with Pag-IBIG Fund. The validated email address will appear on the screen.

In case the OFW Member does not have or has an incorrect email address on record, he/she shall be required to encode his/her email address. It is important that the OFW Member provides his/her email address in order to receive the electronic raffle entries corresponding to his/her remittance.

Accumulating steps 2 and 3 shall entitle an OFW Member to receive a bonus of one (1) raffle entry. The bonus raffle entry shall be received in the SECOND email to be sent by Pag-IBIG Fund. The FIRST email confirms only the Member's participation in the Raffle Promo.

Only one Pag-IBIG ID number per OFW member will be validated by the PIGG Raffle Committee. The use of more than one Pag-IBIG ID number will invalidate the Member's participation in the raffle promo.

Steps 2 and 3 shall only be done once. Hence, subsequent remittances of MS will no longer require these steps.

- There will be three (3) raffle draws, as follows:
 - 23 August 2013 (1st Preliminary Draw)
 - 28 October 2013 (2nd Preliminary Draw)
 - 23 December 2013 (Grand Draw)
- The raffle promo period shall run for five and a half months from 18 June 2013 to 30 November 2013.
- All prizes are non-transferable and non-cashable to cash (except the US\$10,000.00 grand cash prize which will be converted into its Philippine peso equivalent based on the prevailing exchange rate on the date of the grand raffle draw promo).
- All winners shall be notified thru telephone calls, e-mail or registered mailing address as registered in his/her records with the Fund. Winners of each draw shall also be announced in major newspapers in the Philippines and in the Fund's official website.

For complete details of the raffle mechanics, you may visit our website: www.pagibigfund.gov.ph or call us at (+632) 4223381, (+632) 8043386. You may also send us an email thru raffle@pagibigfund.gov.ph.

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Cyprus Corner

Filipino Community in Nicosia, Cyprus Celebrates 115th Independence Day and Migrant Workers Day



(left photo) Ambassador Montealegre (center) views the mini-exhibit of Rosita Sumagaysay (2nd from right), a budding Filipino painter. Also shown are (from left): Minister and Consul General Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil, Philippine Honorary Consul to Nicosia Shemaine Bushnell-Kyriakides, Welfare Officer Sylvia Valdez and Ms. Sumagaysay's employer. (Middle photo) Around 500 OFWs based in Cyprus graduate from OWWA Reintegration Training Courses. (Right photo) Rosita's paintings on exhibit during the event.

Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre, Philippine Ambassador to Cyprus resident in Athens, accompanied by Minister and Consul General Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil, attended the joint celebration by the Filipino Community in Cyprus of the 115th Philippine Independence Day and Migrant Workers Day held on Sunday, 07 July 2013 at the European University Cyprus in Nicosia.

Filipinos not only from Nicosia, but also from Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos and other parts of Cyprus commemorated the "Araw ng Pasasalamat, Pagkakaisa at Pagkilala" with a day-long celebration of nationalistic and migration-themed

presentations and cultural performances. Various FilCom organizations showcased their talents in special numbers such as a group rendition of "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo," interpretative dance of "Tayo'y mga Pinoy," a short musical skit on the *harana*, and folk/ethnic dances such as the Tinikling, Cariñosa, Pamaypay ng Maynila, Cordillera Warrior Dance, Bakya Dance, among others.

The event also recognized some 500 OFWs who completed short courses on Greek Language, Basic Computer, Basic First Aid, Leadership, Business Counseling and Financial Literacy, Hair Cutting

and Beauty Care, Beadwork, and Ballroom Dancing under OWWA's Reintegration Training Program.

Rosita Sumagaysay, a budding Filipina painter whose art lessons were sponsored by her employer, also held a mini art exhibit at the venue.

In his message, the Ambassador emphasized the role of every Filipino in creating a strong and stable republic. He also called upon the OFWs in Cyprus to put their newly-acquired skills and learnings to good use, in order that these may pave the way for their brighter future. ■



Ambassador Montealegre's Calls on Cypriot Officials

(First photo)

Ambassador Montealegre called on Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis, MFA Cyprus Permanent Secretary, on 08 July 2013 to discuss ways to further strengthen PHL-Cyprus cooperation.

(Second Photo)



Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre (2nd from left) called on Cyprus' Labor and Social Insurance Minister Zeta Emilianidou (2nd from right) on 08 July 2013 to discuss the welfare of some 16,000 Filipino workers in Cyprus and follow-up the status of the Philippines-Cyprus Social Security Agreement. Also shown in are: Labor Ministry Permanent Secretary (left) and Consul General Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil (right).

(Third photo)



Ambassador Montealegre called on Cyprus' Auditor General Chrystalla Georghadji on 09 July 2013 to present the PHL candidature to UNBOA.

Athens PE Conducts Three Consular Outreach Services in Cyprus

The Philippine Embassy in Athens conducted three consular outreach services in Nicosia, Cyprus from 1 to 3 March 2013; 16 to 20 May 2013 and 06 to 08 September 2013.

Services were also extended by Pag-IBIG.

The consular outreach missions were conducted with the full support of Philippine Honorary Consul in Cyprus Shemaine Bushnell-Kyriakides, Welfare Officer Sylvia Valdez, and the Filipino Community in Cyprus.



The Consular Team at work.