

## Ambassador Montealegre discusses Welfare of Filipino Migrants in Greece with Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection



Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre and Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection Nikolaos Dendias exchange views during the courtesy call of the Ambassador on 04 December 2012.

Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre paid a courtesy call on 04 December 2012, on Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection Nikolaos Dendias.

Ambassador Montealegre conveyed appreciation for Greece's hosting of close to 12,000 land-based and 50,000 sea-based Filipinos in the country. He highlighted the long tradition of friendship and cooperation that has always existed between the two countries, and expressed hope for deepening such cooperation.

Minister Dendias told the Ambassador that Filipinos enjoy the high regard of Greek employers. He praised them for being friendly, well-mannered, peaceful, and law-abiding citizens. He also acknowledged the fact that Filipino workers in Greece are an important element in Greek society and economy.

Both the Ambassador and the Minister agreed to closely cooperate on matters concerning the welfare of Filipinos living and working in Greece. ■

## FilCom celebrates 'Paskong Pinoy' in Greece



Ambassador Meynardo Montealegre delivers his Christmas message to the Filcom members.

The Filipino community and the Philippine Embassy in Athens celebrated Paskong Pinoy at the Athinaion Cinema on Sunday, 16 December 2012 in Athens. The celebration was well-attended by Filipinos from all over Greece, many of whom are members of the different organizations. This year's theme revolved around "Paskong Pinoy sa Gresya: Diwa ng Pagkakaisa," inviting hope, optimism, and true spirit of unity and cooperation among the Filipinos in Greece amidst the economic difficulties in the country.

(Continued on page 8)

## Athens PE Meets the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce

The Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre met with the founding members of the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce, Mr. Yorgos Psinakis, Mr. Harris Ikonomopoulos, and Ms. Christina Deligianni at the chancery on 22 October 2012. This is the first meeting between the Philippine Embassy in Athens and the Chamber.

Also present during the meeting were First Secretary and Consul General Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil, Third Secretary and Vice Consul Sheila Marie C. Tario, Labor Attache Romulo Salud, Welfare Officer Leonor Maba-gal, and Philippine Honorary Consul in Thessaloniki Nikolaos Margaropoulos.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Montealegre expressed support for the Chamber. He also stated that he looks forward to closer cooperation and partnership between the Philip-

(Continued on page 3)

## Ambassador Montealegre Meets with the Minister of Tourism of Greece



Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre met with H.E. Olga Kefalogianni, Minister of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic on 21 November 2012 at the Ministry of Tourism in Athens.

During the meeting, Ambassador Montealegre apprised the Minister of the growing business confidence on the Philippines, brought about by President Benigno S. Aquino III's transfor-

(Continued on page 3)



## OAV ACTIVITIES

### Athens PE Conducts "Akyat Barko" Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Mobile Registration



On board MV Cosco Ningbo at Perama Port in Piraeus, Athens, on 7 September 2012.



On board MV Thomson Majesty on 03 October 2012



On board on board MV Louis Olympia on 08 October 2012



On board M Tanker Andromeda on 11 October 2012



On board on board MV Louis Crystal on 12 October 2012



On board MV Grandeur of the Seas on 19 October 2012



At the Piraeus Port Terminal capturing seafarers on board MV Crown Princess and MYS Wind Spirit on 20 October 2012



On board MV Norwegian Spirit on 22 October 2012



On board MV Seven Seas Mariner on 23 October 2012

OAV Field Registrations in Corfu, Greece, 09 September; Nicosia, Cyprus, 14-16 September; Thessaloniki, Greece, 14 October; and Kos and Rhodos Island, Greece, 25-27 October 2012



OAV Mobile Registrations in Crete, Greece, 21-22 April; Nicosia, Cyprus, 26-27 May; Zappieo, Athens, 10 June; Filcom Event, Athens, 02 September; and Patras, 31 October 2012





## Athens PE renews ties with the Local Gov't Officials and Business Leaders of Patras

Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre met with various government officials and business leaders during his official visit to Patras from 29 to 30 November 2012.

During his meetings, Ambassador Montealegre explored areas of cooperation between the Philippines and the local government and business community of Patras.

Ambassador Montealegre also highlighted the growing positive business confidence in the Philippines brought



**Ambassador Montealegre (second from left) explores areas of cooperation with Mr. Manolis Aggelakas, General Secretary of the Decentralized Administration of Peloponnese, West Greece and Ionian (center).**

about by President Benigno S. Aquino III's transformational leadership, particularly his strong campaign for transparency and anti-corruption. The Philippines recently posted a GDP of 7.1% for the third quarter of 2012 surpassing economic forecasts. Am-

bassador Montealegre also underscored the fact that from being a user of IMF resources for decades, the Philippines has now attained creditor status.

The business leaders expressed great interest in the Philippines and agreed to exchange information with the Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Honorary Consulate in Patras.

Ambassador Montealegre met Mr. Ioan-



**In the photo: Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre (center) with the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Achaia, Mr. Platon Marlafekas, (left) and Philippine Honorary Consul in Patras, Mrs. Anastasia Manolopoulou (right).**

nis Dimaras, Mayor of Patras, Mr. Manolis Aggelakas, General Secretary of the Decentralized Administration of Peloponnese, West Greece and Ionian, Mr. Platon Marlafekas, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Achaia, Mr. Phaedon Couniniotis, President of the Federation of Industries of Peloponnese and Western Greece. Ambassador Montealegre also met with members of the Filipino community in Patras.

Patras is located in northern Peloponnese and is the third largest city of Greece. It is the second largest port after Piraeus in Athens. ■

(Continued from page 1)  
.... Hellenic Filipino

pine Embassy and the Hellenic-Filipino Chamber for Business and Commerce. Ambassador Montealegre informed the founding members of the Chamber of the recent developments obtaining in the Philippines primarily the positive economic growth, and the growing business confidence by foreign investors in the Philippines brought about by the transformational leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III.

The Chamber acknowledged the numerous positive developments in the Philippines and agreed to work closely with the Philippine Embassy in further-



**From left: Labor Attache Romulo Salud, Welfare Officer Leonor Mabagal, Consul General Charmaine Aviquivil, Honorary Consul Nikolaos Margaropoulos, Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre, Mr. Yorgos Psinakis, Ms. Christina Deligianni, Mr. Harris Ikonomopoulos, and Vice Consul Sheila Tario.**

ing economic relations between the Philippines and Greece. They stated that both the Embassy and the Chamber can work together on joint activities such as business seminars, and trade missions, among others. ■

(Continued from page 1)...Minister of Tourism

mational leadership, particularly his strong campaign for good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption.

Ambassador Montealegre further stated that in the first quarter of 2012, the Philippines posted a GDP of 6.4% and 5.9% in the second quarter surpassing economic forecasts.

Both Ambassador Montealegre and Minister Kefalogianni acknowledged that the Philippines and Greece can learn so much from each other in terms of tourism promotion and industry development. Both sides agreed to revitalize relations between the Philippines and Greece in the area of tourism. ■

## Ambassador Montealegre visits the Thessaloniki International Fair



From right: Ambassador Montealegre, Mr. Papakonstantinou, General Director of Helexpo SA, and Mr. Margaropoulos, Philippine HonCon in Thessaloniki

The Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre visited the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) on 8 September 2012. He also met with Mr. Dimitrios Bakatselos, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Thessaloniki and Mr. Ioannis Papakonstantinou, General Director of Helexpo SA during the visit.

The Thessaloniki International Fair is one of the biggest expositions in Greece. The Fair is currently on its 77th year and is being held from 8 to 16 September 2012 at the Thessaloniki International Exhibitions and Congress Center. The Fair features various thematic sections for automobiles, building materials and construction, energy, furniture, Greek regions, state organizations, inventions, e-gaming, and farming.

During his meetings, Ambassador Montealegre explored areas of economic cooperation

between the Philippines and the business community of Thessaloniki. The meeting with Mr. Bakatselos was an opportunity to discuss the details of an Investment Seminar on the Philippines to be held in Thessaloniki in the last quarter of this year. Ambassador Montealegre also highlighted in his meetings the growing

positive business confidence in the Philippines brought about by President Benigno S. Aquino III's transformational leadership, particularly his strong campaign for transparency and accountability. As a result, the Philippines is now dubbed as one of the "Breakout Nations" surpassing economic forecasts. In turn, the local business leaders were impressed to hear about the latest achievements of the Philippines.

Thessaloniki is located in northern Greece and is the country's second major economic, industrial, commercial and political center, and a major transportation hub for the rest of southeastern Europe. It was the second largest and wealthiest city of the Byzantine Empire. ■



Ambassador Montealegre met with Mr. Bakatselos, President of the CCI of Thessaloniki, and his team to discuss details of a planned Investment Seminar on the Philippines.

## Ambassador Montealegre Meets with the President of Stealth Maritime Corporation



Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre met with Mr. Harris Vafias, President of Stealth Maritime Corporation, on 6 November 2012 at the Vafias Group headquarters in Athens.

Mr. Vafias conveyed to Ambassador Montealegre his appreciation to the Philippine Government for recognizing companies, such as Stealth Maritime Corp., that hire a number of Filipinos. According to Mr. Vafias, Filipinos comprise at least 90% of the crew in each of Stealth Maritime's vessels. Mr. Vafias further stated that his company prefers Filipinos for their skill, hard work, and fluency in English. Mr. Vafias and Ambassador Montealegre agreed to cooperate with one another in further strengthening economic ties between Greece and the Philippines.

Stealth Maritime Corp. was founded by Mr. Harris Vafias in 1999. Today, it is Greece's fourth largest shipping group. Stealth Maritime's tankers trade worldwide. ■

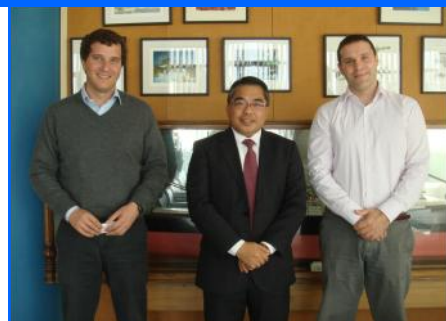
## Athens PE Meets with the Chairman of Thenamaris Ships Management

Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre met with Mr. Ioannis C. Martinos, Chairman of Thenamaris Ships Management, on 16 November 2012 at the Thenamaris Headquarters in Vouliagmeni, Greece.

During the meeting, Ambassador Montealegre expressed appreciation to Mr. Martinos for hiring Filipinos to man Thenamaris' vessels. He also encouraged Mr. Martinos to consider investing in the shipbuilding sector in the Philippines, which is now number four as a shipbuilding nation.

Mr. Martinos informed Ambassador Montealegre that his company has around 1,000 Filipino employees. He likewise acknowledged the fact that the Philippines is number one in the world in terms of manning services for continuously producing high quality officers.

Ambassador Montealegre informed Mr. Martinos about the growing positive business confidence by foreign investors on the Philippines through the transformational leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III. Mr. Martinos replied that they, at Thenamaris, are following closely the developments in the Philippines. He stated that he is impressed



Ambassador (center) meets Mr. Martinos (left), Chairman of Thenamaris Ships Management and Mr. Tsapoulis, Deputy Manager of the Marine Personnel Department (right).

with the overall strategy of the Philippines and its systematic approach in developing its economy.

Mr. Martinos and Ambassador Montealegre agreed to cooperate with one another in further strengthening economic ties between Greece and the Philippines.

Thenamaris was founded in 1970 and provides management services to the owners of more than 50 modern tankers and bulk carriers, mostly built after the year 2000, of an overall tonnage of about four million tons deadweight. ■



## PHL joins the 50<sup>th</sup> Lefkas International Folklore Festival in Greece



The KALOOb performs Tinikling in the Open Theater of Lefkas which impressed the Lefkadian audience

The Philippines, represented by the Kaloob Philippine Dance and Music Ministry under Eduardo Lapiz as its founder, president and artistic director, participated in the 50<sup>th</sup> Lefkas International Folklore Festival in Lefkada, northwestern island of Greece from 19 to 26 August 2012.

The Festival gathered 34 performing groups from regional parts of Greece and other countries including Estonia, Mexico, Venezuela, Japan, China, Israel, India, Poland, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Palestine. Lefkada invited the Philippines through the Philippine Embassy in Athens, which coordinated the Philippine participation with the Kaloob Ministry, the DFA and the NCCA, as part of its economic and cultural program.

The Philippine Embassy led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre, joined the festival's

opening ceremony on 19 August upon the invitation of the Mayor of Lefkada, Mr. Kostas Aravanis, and to support the group.

Thirty-four Kaloob members represented the group during the Lefkas Folklore Festival. The Group's performances of Singkil and Tinikling wowed the audience during the street parade and the opening ceremony held in the town center of Lefkada on 19 August.

The dance troupe also performed Tinikling, Binasuan, Pandanggo sa Ilaw, Maglalatik and other traditional dances and music.

This is the first time that the Philippines is participating in the Festival. The audience was impressed with the colorful and graceful presentation of the dance troupe. The organizers expressed their interest to invite the Philippines to

participate again in the said Festival next year.

Consul General Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil, Vice Consul Sheila Marie C. Tario and other Embassy staff watched and supported the Group's performances.

The Kaloob Ministry is committed to the studious research, documentation, preservation, appreciation, promotion and creative reuse of fast-vanishing Philippine indigenous music, dance and rituals.

The Ambassador expressed his appreciation to Mayor Aravanis and the organizers for inviting and hosting the Philippines to participate in the Festival during his call in the Mayor's office.

Through the Festival, the Embassy aims to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines through dance and music to the Greek audience. ■



Ambassador Montealegre exchanges pleasantries with Mayor of Lefkas, Mr. Kostas Aravanis.

## PHL Dance Troupe Wows Greek Audience at the EARTH DANCERS" Festival

The KALOOb Philippine Music and Dance Ministry impressed the Greek audience with its rousing performance of "Maglalatik" to the tune of "Zorba the Greek" during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Culture Festival "EARTH DANCERS" from 29 August to 02 September 2012 at the Municipalities of Galatsi and Marathonos, in Central Greece. The Group earlier participated in the 50<sup>th</sup> Lefkas International Folklore Festival in Lefkada, northwestern island of Greece from 19 to 26 August 2012.

The Group's participation in both Festivals was coordinated by the Philippine Embassy in Athens as part of its economic and cultural diplomacy program.

The Group, led by Mr. Lapiz, called on the Ambassador on 28 August at the Philippine Embassy. The Ambassador thanked the Group for its impressive performances at the Lefkas Festival and the Earthdancers Festival in Galatsi.

Aside from the Philippines and Greece, the Earthdancers Festival gathered nine (9) other performing groups from different countries such as Argentina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Mexico, Palestine, Portugal, Turkey, and Venezuela.

The Philippine Embassy led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre, joined the Festival's opening and closing ceremonies on 29 August and 02 September, respectively upon the invitation of the Mayor of Galatsi, Mr. Kyriakos Tsiros, and to support the group.

During the main performances from 30 August to 01 September, the dance troupe performed Singkil, Tinikling, Binasuan, Pandanggo sa Ilaw, and other traditional dances and music.

The Philippines participated in the Festival for the first time. The audience was impressed with the colorful and graceful renditions of Kaloob's repertoire of dances including Cordillera Suites, Barrio Suites and Lumad Suites. The organizers expressed their admiration of the Group's performances and professionalism.

Members of the Filipino community numbering to 80 trooped to the Open Theater to watch the group's performance. The Filcom members rented a bus during the opening and the closing ceremonies of the Festival to catch the Group's presentations.



Embassy officials pose with the Kaloob group after the latter's performance at Outdoor Theater of the Sports and Cultural Center of Nea Makri, Marathonos, Greece.



The Kaloob performs "Maglalatik" to the tune of "Zorba the Greek" during the closing ceremony held at the Alsos Veikou Open Air Theater, Galatsi, Greece.

The Filcom members felt very proud to witness the group's lively and colorful presentations and marveled at the well-researched and authentic rendition of the Filipino traditional music and dances. They expressed the hope that another Philippine group will visit Greece soon to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines through dance and music to the Greek audience.

Mr. Lapiz and the Group expressed their sincere appreciation to the Philippine Embassy for all the support extended by the Ambassador and officers and staff of the Embassy during the group's call at the Philippine Embassy held on 28 August 2012.

The Group capped their five-day presentation in Athens and the Attica area with a rousing medley of Filipino dances during the closing ceremony in Galatsi on 02 September 2012

The Kaloob donated a Kulintang set, Agong and bamboo poles for Tinikling to the Embassy and a set of T'boli costumes, gong and bamboo sticks to the Museum of Lefkas. ■

## 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.

### PHL Independent Short Films Participate in Three Film Festivals

Three Philippine independent (indie) short films took part in three different film festivals in Greece in September to October 2012.

The film "Manenaya" (Waiting) by indie director Richard Legaspi, participated in the competition program of the International Film Festival of Drama held from 17 to 22 September 2012 in Drama City (Northeastern Greece)

"Manenaya" is a story of a determined woman and her journey through life under the backdrop of the various landscapes of Pampanga. She brings with her a wooden casket for her husband, a victim of political killings. It won the Jury prize award in the 8<sup>th</sup> Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival in July 2012.

Another Legaspi film, "Pamatid-Gutom" (Hunger Pangs), competed in the 9<sup>th</sup> Naoussa International Film Festival held from 26 to 30 September 2012 in Naoussa, Northern, Greece.

"Pamatid-Gutom", which stars Mercedes Cabral, is a stark rendition of electoral politics in post-EDSA Philippines. A mother, desperate to feed her child, takes part in the feeding program of the mayor of the city. Upon seeing the favorable response of the wife of the mayor to her child, she undertakes a disturbing

CONSOLIDATED SCHEDULE OF SERVICE FEES (EFFECTIVE 01 OCTOBER 2012)		OLD	NEW
<b>PASSPORT SERVICES</b>		EURO	EURO
1. Regular Passport (32 pages with 5 years validity)		60.00	54.00
2. Amendment of Regular Passport		20.00	18.00
3. Replacement of Lost Passport		90.00	81.00
4. Travel Documents		30.00	27.00
<b>VISA SERVICES FOR ALIENS</b>			
1. 9(a) Temporary Visitor Visa for pleasure/business/health			
a) Single entry valid for three (3) months		30.00	27.00
b) Multiple entry valid for six(6) months		60.00	54.00
c) Multiple entry valid for one (1) year		90.00	81.00
d) For restricted aliens, single entry		40.00	36.00
2. 9(b) Transit Visa, single entry valid for 3 months for a stay of not more than 72 hours			
a) For non-restricted aliens		20.00	18.00
b) For restricted aliens		40.00	36.00
3. 9(c) Seaman Visa (Individual)		20.00	18.00
4. 9(d) Crew List Visa of vessels			
a) Crew members of not more than forty (40)		100.00	90.00
b) Crew members from forty-one (41) to one-hundred (100)		150.00	135.00
c) Crew members from one hundred (100) to two hundred (200)		200.00	180.00
d) Crew members in excess of two hundred (200)		250.00	225.00
5. 13 (a-f) Non-quota immigrant visa:		150.00	135.00
a) Spouses of Filipino Citizens & unmarried children under 21 years old			
b) Filipino woman who lost their Philippine citizenship under 21 years old			
c) Former Filipino naturalized in a foreign country			
<b>NOTARIALS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES</b>			
1. Solemnization of Marriage		60.00	54.00
2. Birth/Marriage Registration		25.00	22.50
3. Authentication/Acknowledgement of Documents		25.00	22.50
4. Certification for sealing of casket		60.00	54.00
5. Certification to the correctness of a copy/extract of document		25.00	22.50
6. Copies of official records & documents or for certificates in the form of "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"		60.00	54.00
7. Translation Services (Per page & fraction thereof)		25.00	22.50
8. Interpretation Services (Per hour & fraction thereof)		60.00	54.00
9. Any other certificates		25.00	22.50
10. Fax charges (Per page & fraction thereof)		25.00	22.50

ing gamble.

Ms. Agnes-Macam Romero and Elizabeth Bognot Masangkay, Kapampangan indie/theater actresses represented the Philippines in the two film festivals.

Athens PE coordinated with the organizers of the two Festivals, PHL Honorary Consul Nicolaos Margaropoulos of Thessaloniki and the Filipino community in Thessaloniki for the smooth participation of the Filipino actresses in the festivals

From Naoussa, the two actresses proceeded to Athens where the Embassy hosted a simple dinner for them on 01 October 2012. According to them, the

film "Manenaya" was well received by the Greek audience.

The film, "Hunger Pangs" and "Patronage Politics" by Mr. Seymour Barros Sanchez participated in the International Film Festival of Patras City held from 30 September - 06 October 2012 in Patras, Greece.

"Patronage Politics" is a short documentary of enduring patterns of patronage politics in the Philippines. "Patronage Politics" chronicles the activities throughout a typical election season. By examining the fiesta mentality of Filipinos and their attitudes towards politics, several gripping comparisons will be drawn.

HonCon Anastasia Manalopoulou of Patras attended the film screening of "Patronage Politics."

Post also communicated with Director Legaspi and was informed that it was a great honor for him that his films were finalists in the competition program of the Festivals although they did not win any awards. ■

### Athens PE signs a MOU with the IST College

The Philippine Embassy in Athens signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Independent Science and Technology College (IST College) in Greece on 14 November 2012. Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre signed the MOU on behalf of the Philippine Embassy, while Dr. George Kastinakis, General Director and Legal Administrator of IST College, and Ms. Daphne Fountoukakou, Head of Quality Assurance and Legal Administrator of IST College signed on behalf of IST College.

The MOU aims to further relations between the Philippines and Greece in the academic and cultural fields, particularly in shipping, tourism and education. Under the MOU, each side is to



pursue various activities such as the provision of two full scholarships for Filipino secondary school graduates in Greece, organization of cultural exhibitions and events, facilitation of cooperation and exchanges of students and academic personnel, among others.

At present, IST College has already granted full scholarship to a Filipino student for the current academic year. ■

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## LABOR PAGE



Embassy officials attended the POLO's Technology-Transfer Training on Mediterranean Cooking Class held at the VISMAG Center.

In the face of the lingering economic recession in Greece since 2008, Post has strengthened its on-site reintegration preparedness program in anticipation of any untoward displacement of overseas Filipino workers, as a result thereof. Greece basically caters to household workers only.

Thus, the Philippine Embassy through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) has been focusing its efforts in conducting

need-based skills upgrading and capability-building training in order to enhance the potentials, employability and global competitiveness of our household service workers (HSWs) in Greece (as compared to their counterparts from other labor sending countries), that would allow them to move to a higher level of service

-oriented work category (i.e. care givers, hotel/restaurant workers and office receptionists).

It may be noted that caregivers are in high demand in Canada. Some graduates from the POLO's skills training who were not lucky enough to renew their employment contract, have managed to transfer to Canada as care givers, while some HSWs have been given opportunity by their employers to perform either clerical

or technical jobs in their office, depending on their educational background, with additional pay.

Some 72 and 78 OFWs have successfully completed the requirements of POLO's skills upgrading training in Caregiving, Greek Language, Computer Literacy and Mediterranean Cooking during the Winter and Fall sessions, respectively.

Post has also concentrated in providing guidance to OFWs on how to manage their finances, conducting seminars/orientations on values re-direction, entrepreneurship appreciation, business counseling and technology-transfer. These efforts are in line with the Philippine government's thrust in tapping the OFWs as potential investors and partners in economic development of the country. While entrepreneurship has been considered as the best alternative to overseas opportunities, it could also trigger local employment generation, and somehow mitigate the alarming adverse effect of the social cost of migration to the Filipino families. ■

### Athens PE Participates in the Friends of the Child's 13<sup>th</sup> International Christmas Bazaar

The Philippine Embassy in Athens participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> International Christmas Bazaar from 24 to 25 November 2012. The bazaar was held at Helexpo Palace in Marousi, Athens. Other embassies also participated in the bazaar.

The bazaar was organized by the Friends of the Child, a charitable association of Greek women which was established in 1987. The proceeds will be used to support the Friends of the Child's Nursery School for children of single mothers in need.

The Philippine Embassy showcased Filipino products such as dried mangoes, native bags, pouches and fans, placemats, and ladies' accessories (including necklaces made from fresh water pearls).

Filipino cooked food (pancit, puto, lumpiang shanghai, longganiza, empanada, butsi and siopao) that have been enjoying popular patronage were also sold during the event. ■



The officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy during the 13<sup>th</sup> International Christmas Bazaar which was held from 24 to 25 November 2012 at Helexpo Palace, Athens.

### Athens PE Marks 116<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Martyrdom of Dr. Jose Rizal



The Philippine Embassy in Athens led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre and Filipino community leaders sing the "Lupang Hinirang" during the 116<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Dr. Jose Rizal on 30 December 2012.

The Philippine Embassy in Athens celebrated the 116<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of Philippine National Hero Dr. Jose Rizal together with Filipino community leaders in Athens on Sunday, 30 December 2012.

Embassy officers and staff and FilCom leaders gathered in front of the Rizal bust at the Embassy grounds to sing the national anthem, "Lupang Hinirang," and pledged allegiance to the Philippine flag through the recitation of the "Panunumpa sa Watawat." Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre then offered a floral bouquet to the bust of Dr. Rizal.

In his message, the Ambassador highlighted the significance of the martyrdom of Rizal, saying that he "died holding steadfast to his belief that the freedom of all Filipinos is worth dying for," and that "his death galvanized the hearts and minds of all Filipino patriots, paving the way for

our nation's freedom from foreign oppression."

He also pointed out that the occasion provides an opportunity to celebrate not merely Rizal's death, but more importantly, his brief but meaningful life and his vital influence on all Filipinos. "In his short lifetime spanning only 35

years, he has done far more for the country than other men have been able to do in their entire life," the Ambassador stated.

In line with the theme "Rizal 2012: Ehemplong Sambayanan sa Tuwid na Daan," Ambassador Montealegre also encouraged all present to emulate the life of the national hero, saying that it provides an inspiration for all Filipinos to strive to live their lives following the straight and narrow path, which is also in accordance with President Aquino's emphasis on adhering to "tuwid na daan" in his governance.

The Filipino community leaders actively participated in the event through a poetry reading of the 14 stanzas of Rizal's final and well-known masterpiece, "My Last Farewell." This was followed by a viewing of the Rizal exhibit and a simple salu-salo. ■



## 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.



Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre opened the tournament during the Purebats Intercolor Basketball Tournament held on 02 September 2012 at Fokianos Gymnasium.



Ambassador Montealegre attended the FILBAG 10th Annual Bowling Team Tournament Opening on 14 October 2012 in Patision, Athens



Ambassador Montealegre attended the KA-PAMILYA FAIR and TFCKat Contest held 14 October 2012 at Danaos Theater.



Ambassador Montealegre led the induction of the officers of the UNIFIED Guardians in Athens, Greece held on 03 November 2013 at the President Hotel



Ambassador Montealegre delivered his inspirational message during the 19th Anniversary of El Shaddai held on 04 November 2012 at Leondio Lykeio.



Embassy officials attended the Accredited Community Partner (ACP) Christmas Get-Together and Oath Taking Ceremony held on 08 December 2012 at VISMAG Center.

## CYPRUS CORNER



Athens PE conducted two mobile consular outreach activities in Nicosia, Cyprus conducted from 14 to 16 September and 01 to 03 December 2012. A total of 1,293 e-passport applications were processed during the visits. The Philippine Honorary Consulate, the POLO-OWWA Cyprus and some members of the Overseas Filipino Volunteer Cyprus (OFVC) assisted the consular team. ■

(Continued from page 1)... Paskong Pinoy

A rousing Christmas medley from talented Filcom members, including finalists of the recently held TFC Kat Contest started the program at 10:00 a.m, followed by the re-enactment of the Nativity by students from the Philippine School in Greece and invocation by the children of Saint Denise Catechism. During the morning program, the Ambassador delivered his Christmas message to the Filcom members calling for unity amidst adversity. He also encouraged the members of the community to rally behind fighting vices and dangerous drugs as well as maintaining the good image of the Filipinos in Greece. The children enjoyed the parlor games, raffles and received gifts from the organizers.

Other presentations followed from Philippine Cultural Educational Academy, Bagong Kapwa Ko Pilipino Athens Organization, Bicolanos in Greece, Filipino Community Academy Institute in Athens, Catholic Union of Filipinos in Athens, St. Denis English Community Choir, KASAPI/Munting Nayon/DIWATA Youth Singing Group, Philippine Guardians Brotherhood International Greece Chapter, Youth for Christ Dancers, Philippine School in Greece, Filipino Bowlers in Athens Greece, Unified Guardians in Greece, Triskelion International, and El Shaddai

Youth.

The finale of the program was a special Christmas presentation showcasing the talents of rising singers and dancers from the Expats Pinoy Artistic Guild. ■

**More Paskong Pinoy 2012 photos could be accessed at the Embassy website.**

