



## Christmas Message of Foreign Secretary Albert F. Del Rosario

We celebrate this season of hope, peace and renewal with a new sense of profound meaning and motivation, as reflected in our national consciousness and demonstrated by our collective aspirations as a people.

The year 2013 witnessed unprecedented devastation in the Visayas and brazen terrorist attacks in Mindanao. Yet, the Philippines, like the resilience of an Asian bamboo, is truly unbowed.

The unparalleled demonstration of compassion and overwhelming solidarity of our key allies, development partners, and people from all walks of life have inspired us to soldier on; gently reminding us that the Philippines is not alone.

While the task of reconstruction is both complex and daunting, we are confident and prepared to meet, head on, the challenges that lie before us.

Spurred by a clear commitment to inclusive growth, our President, His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III, has vowed to realize a climate change-resilient Philippines to sustain our economy's momentum and further improve the quality of life of the Filipino people.

Through all these challenges and opportunities, the Department of Foreign Affairs ensures that the Philippines stands firmly as the voice of reason, championing an enlightened advocacy for peaceful relations through diplomatic consultations and strict adherence to the rule of law.

We intensify our economic diplomacy efforts to attract foreign direct investments, boost trade and tourism, and encourage development assistance. Despite Yolanda, the Philippines continues to receive resounding affirmation for its resilient economic performance and good governance reform agenda.

We maintain a proactive stance and strengthen our capacities to ensure that the rights and welfare of 10 million Filipinos overseas are promoted and protected at all times on a 24/7 basis, in 174 countries over 40 time zones.

Above all, we continue to push for a principled and independent Philippine foreign policy, heightened by our ability to cooperate, negotiate and assert our rightful place in the community of nations.

I thank the outstanding men and women of the Department, based in the Home Office, the RCOs and satellite offices, and in all our 84 Posts abroad, for your hard work, steadfast commitment and positive contributions.

Let us all continue to serve as instruments of peace, channels of hope, and bridges of renewal and reconciliation.

A most Meaningful Christmas and a Grace-filled New Year!



**Athens PE Commemorates the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Andres Bonifacio**  
*(story on page 4)*

**Filcom in Athens holds a Mega Bazaar for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda**

The Filipino community in Athens, Greece led by the Accredited Community Partners (ACP), in coordination with the Philippine Embassy in Athens, Philippine Overseas Labor Office/ Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (POLO-OWWA) and Pag-IBIG

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Christmas Message



On behalf of the officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy in Athens Greece, we wish our Kababayans in Greece and in Cyprus a meaningful Christmas celebration and a prosperous New Year.

The Philippine Embassy expresses its appreciation for all the support and assistance extended by the Filipino community leaders and members to the Embassy for the year 2013. The Embassy looks forward to working closely with you in 2014.

Isang Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa inyong lahat!

## Visit of NCCA Chairman Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. To Greece

NCCA Chairman De Leon Visits Greece to Enhance

NCCA Chairman de Leon Promotes Philippine Cultural Heritage to Greek and Filipino Audiences

National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Chairman Felipe M. De Leon, Jr. visited Greece from 21 to 25 October 2013 to explore ways to deepen cultural cooperation.

Chairman De Leon, together with Philippine Ambassador to Greece Meynardo LB. Montealegre, met several Greek officials, including Minister of Culture Panos Panagiotopoulos, and with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO.

During Chairman De Leon's call on Minister Panagiotopoulos on 24 October, the NCCA Chair ex-

NCCA Chairman Felipe M. De Leon, Jr. visited Greece from 21 to 25 October 2013 for a lecture series/roundtable discussion on Philippine arts and culture. The Chairman's visit is part of the Embassy's "Meet My Country: The Philippines" series under its economic and cultural diplomacy program.

The Embassy organized a roundtable discussion for Greek art and culture experts at the Ambassador's residence on 22 October. A number of participants, including museum directors, musicians, university professors, art historians and writers attended the event.

The event aimed to: promote

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 1)... NCCA Chairman pressed the Philippines' desire to pursue closer cooperation with Greece through the implementation of the existing Cultural Agreement signed in 1997, by way of an Executive Program. Ambassador Montealegre pointed out that the forthcoming 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of PHL-Greece diplomatic relations in 2015 will provide an excellent platform to initiate more active and deeper cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Chairman De Leon said that the Philippines is interested in further strengthening the role of culture in development, and that he hopes for PHL-Greece collaboration in this aspect. He expressed optimism to learn from Greece's expertise in preserving the country's cultural heritage.

The Minister expressed Greece's readiness to take cultural cooperation with the Philippines to the next level and said that Greece likewise wants tangible results from the existing Agreement.

While Greece is undergoing economic difficulties, he believes that this is also a time for reform, and cultural promotion could help Greece in its quest for recovery. He said that the Ministry stands ready to co-organize cultural events with the Philippines, and to proceed with people-to-people exchanges (artists, experts). He proposed the formation of a PHL-Greece Committee to work on the Executive Program, specifying concrete dates and events.

Chairman de Leon also met with Ambassador Nikolaos Kaimenakis, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' E1 Directorate for Educational and Cultural Affairs on 22 October.

The NCCA Chair said the Philippines places great importance in the role of culture in development, and identified the following cultural priorities of the Philippines: Promotion of artistic creativity; Conservation of cultural heritage (natural and man-made); and Revitalizing cultural industries. He also said that the Philippines

wants to learn from Greece's experience in the preservation of tangible cultural heritage, and at the same time, also wants to strengthen its intangible heritage.

Amb. Kaimenakis said that Greece's specific interests in culture lie in the protection of cultural heritage, especially in getting an international consensus on curbing the illegal trade of



(left to right) Expert Minister Counselor Panagiotis Lambiris of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Commission for Culture and the Arts Chairman Felipe De Leon, Jr., Ambassador Nikolaos Kaimenakis, Deputy Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and Ambassador Meynardo B. Montealegre during the call at the Hellenic MFA on 22 October 2013.



Chairman de Leon discusses with Minister Panagiotopoulos future cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and the NCCA.



Call on Mrs. Ekaterina Tzitzikosta, President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO on 24 October 2013.

artifacts, and exploring with other countries common candidates for inscription in the UNESCO list (e.g. the Mediterranean diet, theaters in the Mediterranean area).

Other possible areas of cultural cooperation are cinematic co-productions, where the finished film could be marketed as a European co-production and thus could help the Filipino film industry penetrate the European market; exchanges of chorale, musical or dance groups (an area where the Philippines excels); and joint production of Filipino and Greek traditional musical instruments.

Noting the existence of a PHL-Greece Culture Agreement signed in 1997, both sides agreed to maximize their potentials for cultural exchanges and collaboration. Both sides agreed that it is high time to craft an Executive Program, which is the best way to implement the Cultural Agreement.

The Ambassador said that having an Executive Program will be a concrete

achievement in PHL-Greece relations, especially in light of the forthcoming 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of PHL-Greece diplomatic relations in 2015.

Chairman De Leon also met with Ms. Ekaterina Tzitzikosta, President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO, on 24 October.

During the meeting, Chairman De Leon proposed several possible areas of cooperation, including: Greek marble cutters to train Filipino marble workers in Romblon; and PHL-Greek collaboration in reviving interest and possibly organizing Delphic/Pythian Games in the Philippines in 2015 in consonance with the Philippine Arts Month held every February.

Ms. Tzitzikosta, on the other hand, suggested sending Filipino students to study in Greek academic institutions; Philippine participation in the UNESCO University Chairs Programme; participation of Filipinos from 12 to 15 years old in Greek youth camps; and Philippine delegation to be invited to the Women in Business event, where the role of gender and culture in business development will be tackled. Both sides also expressed interest in organizing an event (an exhibit or exchange of materials) on native/indigenous textiles.

During the visit, the NCCA Chair also had the opportunity to tour the National Archaeological, Acropolis and Byzantine and Christian Museums in Athens, as well as the Delphi Museum outside Athens. He also visited other cultural sites in Athens such as the Acropolis and had a taste of local flavor/color in the Athenian neighborhoods of Plaka and Monastiraki. ■



(Continued from page 1)... Lecture Series

Philippine arts and culture to Greek art/culture experts and scholars for them to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich and colorful cultural heritage of the Philippines; learn from the Greek experience in promoting and preserving the country's cultural heritage; and share experiences and exchange information on each other's cultural policies, programs, strategies and activities.

Chairman De Leon's presentation, entitled "What Makes a Filipino Filipino" dwelt on the distinct characteristics that underlie Filipino cultural identity such as the Filipino core value of "kapwa," and the value-orientations engendered by this core value, which are: that Filipinos love to connect; that Filipinos like to experience the multi-dimensional wholeness of life; and that Filipinos are highly participatory. These characteristics are also evident in Filipino visual art, sculpture, music, architecture, furniture, fashion, and food. Parallels were also drawn on common features between Philippine and Greek culture and the psyche of both peoples (e.g., Christian values, close family ties, etc.).

The participants had a fruitful exchange and sharing of ideas and experiences on best practices in promoting Philippine and Greek cultural heritage to each other, and explored possibilities for enhanced cooperation through increased exchanges in the field of arts and culture.

The NCCA Chair also delivered two lectures for Filipino audiences. The first lecture was for high school students and teachers of the Philippine School in Greece, and the second was for the members of the Filipino community. These lectures aimed to expose Filipinos in Greece, particularly second and third generation Filipino youth and FilCom members who have long been residing in Greece, to Philippine arts and culture in order for them to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of their homeland, and rekindle in them a sense of pride for their rich cultural heritage.

The lecture to Filipino students entitled "Living Filipino Cultures" focused on the eight different cultures that exist in the Philippines today, namely: *Kultura ng*

*pagdidiwata* of Philippine indigenous peoples, which invoke deities, nature spirits, and ancestral spirits; *Kultura ng pag-uukir at pag-uuma* of Filipino Muslims, which involves poetic mysticism and devotion to Islam; *Kultura ng pamamanata* of village folk, which is manifested by devotion to patron saints and village community; *Kultura ng pananahan*, which refers to the popular culture of the Philippines and reflects devotion to the home and family; *Kultura ng paglilining/ pangangatwiran* or the culture of reflection and reasoning of eminent thinkers, writers, experts, special-

degree or extent) and excellence or greatness (in artistic, intellectual, scientific, humanistic, or technical quality).

Following the lecture, the students expressed interest in sharpening their skills in the arts. They also expressed the desire to learn more about their Filipino roots. Chairman de Leon said that the NCCA has a program where Filipino artists could be sent to train budding young artists overseas. He also encouraged them to join the Lakbay Aral program of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), a two-week cultural immersion program in the



Roundtable discussion on "What Makes a Filipino a Filipino" with Greek art and culture experts.



NCCA Chairman de Leon lectures on "Living Filipino Cultures" to students, teachers and members of the BOT of the KAPHILCA-Philippine School in Greece on 24 October 2013 at the school grounds.



Chairman de Leon's lecture to the Filcom members.

ists; *Kultura ng pag-aaliw* or the culture of entertainment of popular entertainers, celebrities, sports heroes; *Kultura ng pamumuna/pagtutol* or the culture of social criticism, concern, protest of activists and progressive groups; and *Kultura ng pagka-Pilipino/ pagkabansa*, which is a devotion to being Filipino and to the nation.

Chairman De Leon also discussed the importance of promoting Filipino cultural identity, which could be a basis for economic competitiveness. He presented the indicators of Filipino cultural identity and gave concrete Filipino examples of originality (first of its kind), indigenosity (native to the place), authenticity (purity or genuineness), uniqueness (only one of its kind), historicity (connection to past significant events), magnitude (superlative

Philippines which enables Filipino youth overseas to rediscover their Filipino roots and appreciate the richness and diversity of their heritage.

The Filipino community in Greece greatly appreciated Chairman De Leon's lecture, entitled "Ano ang Kulturang Pilipino?" held on the evening of 24 October at the Embassy. He discussed the Filipino core values of "kapwa" (shared identity/goodness/divinity), pakiram-

dam" (shared inner perception), and "kagandahang loob" (shared humanity). They were fascinated with the Chairman's discussion of the many ways (verbal and non-verbal) by which Filipinos express themselves, and the richness and diversity of the Filipino language, as manifested by the 88 different Filipino terms for "looking" or "seeing" and the hundred Filipino words for "touching."

The FilCom also immensely enjoyed the portion of the lecture, where the Chairman played a few popular Filipino tunes on keyboard such as "Maalaala Mo Kaya," "Dahil Sa Iyo" and "Saan Ka Man Naroroon," and had them humming along with the melodies. He highlighted the songs' classic status and their lasting impact from one generation to another. He also played a few bars of the very popular Filipino Christmas song "Pasko na Naman" to the delight of the FilCom, which was composed by his father Felipe P. De Leon, National Artist for Music. ■

(Continued from page 1)... *Bonifacio Day*

Athens PE celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Andres Bonifacio on 30 November at the Philippine Embassy. A two-part program was held with a flag raising ceremony and pledging allegiance to the Philippine flag with the "Panunumpa sa Watawat" by the Embassy officers and staff led by Ambassador Meynardo LB. Montealegre.

The second part of the program was held in the evening, with Ambassador Montealegre delivering a short message to the Filipino community on Andres Bonifacio's contribution to the quest for the independence of the Philippines. He invited the Filipino community members to listen to the musical version of Bonifacio's well known poem "Pag-Ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa." ■

(1st photo) Athens PE officers and staff during the flag raising ceremony in commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Andres Bonifacio on 30 November 2013 at the Embassy grounds; (2nd photo) Leaders of the Filipino community in Athens reading the poem, "Pag-Ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa" written by Andres Bonifacio; (Third photo) Viewing the timeline of Andres Bonifacio's life.



## Athens PE Commemorates Rizal Day 2013

Athens PE commemorated the 117<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of Philippine National Hero Dr. Jose Rizal on 27 December 2013 at the Embassy grounds. Embassy officers and staff and Filipino community members 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."

Chargé d'Affaires Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil then offered a floral bouquet to the bust of Dr. Rizal.

After the flower offering, CDA Aviquivil delivered a short message focusing on this year's theme "Rizal: Inspirasyon Noon, Ngayon at Bukas." All embassy personnel and the Filcom took part in the poetry reading of the two poems of Dr. Rizal: "Sa Aking Mga Kabata" at "Imno sa Paggawa."

This was followed by a viewing of the Rizal exhibit and a simple salu-salo. ■

## Ambassador Montealegre Visits Karditsa

Ambassador Montealegre together with selected Ambassadors from several countries visited the Municipality of Karditsa and Plastira Lake in Thessaly Region of Greece from 13 to 15 December 2013, upon the invitation of Mr. Konstantinos Tsiaras, former Deputy Foreign Minister and present Member of the Parliament and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs.

Amb. Montealegre met with Mayor Diomitris Tsiantis of the Municipality of Plastira Lake, Mayor Constantinos Papalos of Karditsa and Regional Director of Karditsa Mr. Vassillis Tsiaikos.

Amb. Montealegre and the other Ambassadors exchanged views on possible economic, cultural and tourism relations between Karditsa, Plastira Lake and their respective countries, including the establishment of sister-city relations and the participation of cultural groups in Karditsa festivals. ■



The Filipino Community in Athens led by the Accredited Community Partners held a one-day Mega Bazaar on 15 December 2013 in an open basketball court in Ambelokipi. Proceeds of the event were donated to the victims of Typhoon Yolanda.

(Continued from page 1)... *MegaBazaar*

Representative organized a humanitarian one-day Mega Bazaar on 15 December 2013 at the upper part of the open basketball court in Ambelokipi, Athens, to raise funds for victims of Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines. This was in lieu of the annual Christmas celebration of the Filipino community in Athens.

Different Filipino community organizations like the ACP, Bicol Saro with New Horizon, Real Brotherhood, KAPHILCA-Philippine School In Greece, Triad Travel Agency, TIGER FB II, Mindanao Visayas Society, PGBI Greece Chapter, Triskelion Anti Hazing, BIMAK Hellas, Filipino Children's Learning Center, PSG Mt. Bikers, Filipino Christian Fellowship of Athens, Catholic Union of Filipinos in Athens, Philippine Cultural and

Educational Academy, Philippine Overseas Society, Filipino Community Academy Institute, Sentrong Filipino, Athinakos Bowling Club, Tau Gamma Phi Sigma National Council, Red Cross Samaritan Section in Thessaloniki, Metropolitan Bowling Center and Filipino and Greek individuals also participated in the said event through cash donation and selling of food and other items. In-kind donations from individuals and organizations were also converted to cash by selling them during the bazaar.

The officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy attended the event to support the initiative of the Filipino community and coordinated with the Filcom and local authorities in securing a venue for the event.

The bazaar was able to raise a total of €3,200.00. Said amount was remitted to the Philippine Red Cross. ■



## 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.

*The Philippine Embassy welcomes ....*



**Bicol Saro With New Horizon's Induction of Officers.** Ambassador Meynardo Montealegre led the induction of the new set of officers of the BSNH which was held on 05 October 2013 at the Golden Age Hotel.



**Expats Pinoy Artistic Guild's Little Mr. and Ms. Philippines-Greece Pageant.** Consul General Charmaine Aviquivil and Consul Sheila Marie Tario award the winners of the pageant organized by the Expats Pinoy held on 06 October 2013 at Danaos Theater.



Mrs. Louribelle Garcia Quiñones, who arrived in Athens on 26 September 2013 to replace Collecting Officer, Consular Assistant and Attaché Lina Catbagan.

Mrs. Quiñones joined the Department in 2007. Prior to her posting in Athens, Greece, she was assigned at the Office of the Fiscal Management and at the Regional Consular Office in Batangas.

She was born on 14 September 1982 in Tanza, Cavite. She graduated from Polytechnic University of the Philippines with a degree in B.S. Accountancy in 2003.

She is married to Norman Quinones and they have two daughters, Lianne and Naomie Lexine. ■



EL Shaddai Greece Chapter 20th Anniversary. Ambassador Montealegre delivering his message during the event of El Shaddai which was held on 10 November 2013.



Athens PE Simbang Gabi Mass Sponsorship. Officers and staff of the Embassy together with Sr. Emma Rivero and Fr. Gary Mueller at the mass held on 16 December 2013 at the Miraculous Medal Center in Patission.

*and bids farewell to ...*



Ms. Lina Catbagan ended her tour of duty in Athens, Greece on 25 September 2013.

Ms. Catbagan began her career in the Department of Foreign Affairs in November 1998. She has been assigned in the different divisions in the Office of Fiscal Management.

She was also detailed as Collecting Officer in San Fernando La, Union in 2006.

Ms. Catbagan graduated cum laude from Saint Louis College in San Fernando City, La Union in 1998 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. ■

### Athens PE GAD Activities for 2013

Athens PE conducted a basic self-defense awareness and skills training for Embassy personnel on 19 September 2013 and the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women (VAW) which was held on 30 November 2013 at the Philippine Embassy grounds as part of its Gender and Development (GAD) Activities for 2013.

Athens PE conducted self defense training in light of recent incidents involving unprovoked attacks against foreign nationals in Greece. The training aims to equip Embassy personnel with the basic skills and tools to defend themselves against potential attackers.



Mr. Poblete demonstrates to the Embassy personnel the basic self defense techniques during the Gender and Development (GAD) activity of the Embassy held on 19 Sept. at the Embassy.

The training was conducted by Mr. Arden Poblete of the KALIDU Modern Arnis. The training covered basic techniques on Arnis, as well as practical self defense tips, especially for women.

On 30 November 2013, Athens PE observed the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women (VAW) on 30 November 2013 with a short talk on the VAW campaign and showed an anti-VAW video during the Filcom meeting on 30 November 2013. The Filcom associations were encouraged to come up with their own events during the 18-day period. Information materials on the VAW campaign were also distributed

Post uploaded in the Embassy website the VAW logo and campaign briefer; Post displayed VAW posters at the Embassy entrance and Consular section. ■



Congen Aviquivil discusses the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women (VAW) during the Filcom meeting.

## PhilippiNews

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## Athens PE's extended its sympathies to the victims of Typhoon Yolanda

The Philippine Embassy opened a Book of Condolences from 18 to 19 November 2013 for the thousands of Filipinos who perished due to the onslaught of super typhoon Yolanda.

Diplomatic Missions in Athens, the Filipino community and the general public extended their sympathy to the Philippines through letters, phone calls and donations.

The Embassy has also received many pledges of in-kind donations which were referred to the DSWD and DOH. The Embassy has requested all interested donors to send cash donations directly to the government agencies provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Embassy also offered a special mass for the victims of said typhoon on 15 November 2013 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in coordination with Fr. Andreas, the parish priest.

The mass was officiated by Fr. Alberto Paima which provided an opportunity for members of the Filipino community in Greece to pray for the souls of the victims and express solidarity with the families affected by the typhoon.

During the mass, the Filcom members had a second collection intended for the victims of said Typhoon. The collected amount was remitted to the Philippine Red Cross on 17 November 2013 by the

Filipino community.

On 17 November, Consul Anastasia Manolopoulou of Patras sponsored an English-language mass for the typhoon victims. The mass was celebrated by Fr. George Dagas at Saint Andrew Catholic Church. It was attended by Greek members of the Parliament and municipal officials and Filipino community in Patras.

The officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy allotted their two days salary for the victims of said typhoon. ■



Athens PE opened a book of condolences for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda from 13-20 November 2013 at the Philippine Embassy. Diplomatic Missions in Athens, the Filipino community and the general public extended their sympathy to the Philippines.



Amb. Montealegre delivers a short message during the special mass.



Philippine Honorary Consul in Patras, Mrs. Anastasia Manalopoulou organized a special mass for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda on 17 November 2013 at St. Andrew Church. Fr. George Dagas celebrated the mass.



Members of the Filipino community during the special mass offered by the Embassy for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda.

## Filcom Organizations in Thessaloniki, and Crete, Greece and Cyprus Conduct Fund Raising Activity



Filcom in Thessaloniki during the "Concert for a Cause"

On November 24 and December 2, 2013, Filipinos in Thessaloniki with the permission of the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Mr. Yiannis Boutaris conducted a "Concert for a Cause" at the Aristotelous Square.

The Filcom led by Ms. Violy Magnaye coordinated with the Mighty Band, a Filipino band in Thessaloniki who offered their services to play music at the square while Filcom members collected donations from passers-by.

They were able to collect **€1,153.66** and gave portion of the collection to Pastor Ernie Gutierrez, a former Pastor in Thessaloniki to support his TSMT (Tacloban Short Mission Trip) on 08 to 11 December, to provide food aid, building tools/materials and help in the re-

building/repair of churches and homes.

The remaining amount was given to Mrs. Marivic Sajorda, a Kagawad of Barangay San Juan, Sta. Fe, Leyte, whose house was swept away by the typhoon.

On 08 December 2012, an event of love and solidarity was organized by the Philippine Honorary Consulate and the Filcom members led by of Ms. Yolly Cabanlag of the Migrant Workers Without Borders (MWWB) in Heraklion, Crete for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan. They were able to collect **€1,125** which was sent to the Philippine Red Cross on 17 December 2013.



Filcom members in Crete, Heraklion performs Bulak-lakan dance before the Greek audience during their fund raising activity.

The Filipino community in Cyprus together with the Philippine Honorary Consulate in Nicosia and the Holy Cross Catholic Church have also mobilized to collect food, medicine, and money or any other form of aid for the typhoon victims. ■



## Consular Updates

### ADVISORY

The National Security Council of the Office of the President informed the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila that two (2) Filipinas were arrested in Thailand for illegally soliciting funds for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan).

In this regard, the Philippine Embassy in Athens wishes to warn the Filipino community members and other concerned parties against scammers who might be taking advantage of such tragedy, particularly those who are presenting themselves to be part of reputable charitable institutions to get money from unsuspecting donors.

Before making any donation, Filcom members and other concerned parties are requested to verify and do some research to ensure that the donation will be sent to the charitable institution they claim to represent. ■



Republic of the Philippines  
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS  
ABSENTEE VOTING  
MANILA

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTION TO ALL FILIPINO CITIZENS

**For the purposes of the May 09, 2016 elections, the filing of applications for registration/certification shall be from 06 May 2014 (Philippine Time) to 31 October 2015 (Philippine Time)**

## MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 2360

Athens PE wishes to inform Filipinos in Greece that according to the Ministerial Decree No. 2360 (as provided by the Law 3386/2005) published by the Hellenic Government Gazette on 20 September 2013, non-EU nationals who are employed by Greek citizens suffering from quadriplegia, paraplegia, mental retardation or disability of at least 80% can be issued a residence permit allowing them to work/reside in Greece, provided that they meet the following requirements:

The non-EU national must be working for the Greek employer with the above medical conditions for at least one (1) year prior to the date of publication of the present decree;

The employer should bear a certification that proves that he/she is suffering from quadriplegia, paraplegia, mental retardation or has a disability of at least 80%;

The disabled person, his/her relatives or the legal counsel who signs an employment contract with the non-EU national will abide with the provisions of Greek labor laws; and

The non-EU national should not be considered a threat to public order and security.

#### Procedure and Requirements:

The non-EU national should file the application with the competent Greek authorities. He/she will be required to submit the following documents:

- ▶ Duly accomplished application form;
- ▶ Certified True Copy (CTC) of valid passport;
- ▶ Three (3) recent passport size colored photos;
- ▶ Copy of Certification of Disability from KEPA and medical report that certifies

that that disabled person is in need of help and support by another person or copy of the decision of granting allowance of paraplegia or quadriplegia;

▶ Official declaration of the Law 1599/86 (Affidavit) by the Greek citizen or his/her relative stating that the non-EU national has been rendering his/her services for at least one (1) year prior to the publication of the present decree;

▶ Employment Contract;

▶ Health Certificate/ Medical Clearance of the non-EU national; and

▶ Stamp/Tax fees;

For the renewal of the residence permit, the non-EU national should file the application for renewal two (2) months before the expiration of said permit.

#### Reminders:

The validity of the initial residence permit is for one (1) year and renewal is valid for two (2) years;

Change of employer is not allowed;

The employer may apply for only one person for the entire duration of the decree;

The Employer who falls under the regulations of this Ministerial Decree can not be prosecuted nor penalized under Article 86, paragraph 6 of the Law 3386/2005;

Non-EU nationals who can benefit from this Decree are relieved from the sanctions/penalties provided for by Article 86, paragraph 6 of the Law 3386/2005;

The above stated regulations are valid for a period of six (6) months from the date of publication. ■

### Athens PE Conducts Consular Outreach in Thessaloniki

Athens PE conducted a consular outreach in Thessaloniki from 21 to 22 December 2013.

The consular outreach was conducted with the support of Atty. Nikolaos Margaropoulos, Honorary Consul of the Philippines to Thessaloniki, and the Filipino Organization in Northern Greece headed by its President, Ms. Violeta Magnaye.

The consular team provided a total of fifty (50) services. POLO-OWWA Athens likewise provided its services to the Filipinos in Thessaloniki.

Thessaloniki is located in Northern Greece and is the country's second largest city. ■



The Consular team at work. In the photo are Consul Sheila Marie Tario (seated, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left), Honorary Consul Nikolaos Margaropoulos (standing, 1<sup>st</sup> from left) and Filcom leader in Thessaloniki, Ms. Violeta Magnaye (standing, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left).

## LABOR PAGE

### POLO Conducts Free Leadership Workshop

The Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Overseas Labor Office conducted a whole-day Leadership Workshop for free for the leaders of the Filipino Community in Athens, Greece on 10 November 2013 at the Philippine Embassy.

Ms. Maria Katsarou of Our World Group facilitated the conduct of said workshop.

Around 32 Filcom members attended the seminar.

Our World Group specializes in Leadership, Management Development Programs, Group Dynamics, Coaching Interventions at an individual and team level, in Development Centers, as well as HR Outsourcing Activities.

In 2009 Our World Group introduced the "Coaching For Change" Certificate program, which is accredited by the International Coaching Federation (ICF-USA). It operates internationally in countries like Greece, UK, Luxemburg, Denmark, South Africa, New Zealand, USA, Singapore, Malaysia, and others. ■

### 2nd Preliminary Draw of Pag-IBIG's "Dagdag Ipon" Raffle Promo

Athens winners awarded on Nov. 30, 2013:

- Ms. Shirley M. Cabral  
First Prize winner of round trip ticket to the Philippines
- Ms. Melanie G. Magnaye  
Consolation prize of gift certificate
- Ms. Susan G. Aguilar  
Consolation prize of gift certificate

Cyprus winners awarded on Dec. 8, 2013:

- Maria Evelyn M. Calunsang  
Samsung Tablet
- Maria Jane T. Magsino  
Consolation prize of gift certificate
- Maria Ofelia B. Esguerra  
Consolation prize of gift certificate



First Prize winner Shirley Cabral posing with Amb. Montealegre and Pag-IBIG Rep Jean Santos.



Samsung Tablet winner Maria Evelyn Calunsang posing with (l to r) WelOff Valdez, Ms. Bonabon, Consul Kyriakides and Pag-IBIG Rep Ms. Santos.



(left photo) Welfare Officer Leonor Mabagal welcomes the participants to the "Leadership Workshop." (right photo) Ms. Katsarou discusses leadership concepts with the different Filcom members.

## Cyprus Corner

### Athens PE Year End Consular Mobile Services in Nicosia, Cyprus

Athens PE sent a five member Embassy team to Nicosia, Cyprus from 6 to 8 December 2013 in order to meet the Filipino community and render consular mobile services. Post was able to process 528 passport application forms, 5 Reports of Birth, 8 Affidavits and 600 PAG IBIG transactions.

During said mission, POLO-OWWA Nicosia also took the opportunity to provide information to Filipinos on the Philippine government's programs designed to empower OFWs and their families in the Philippines, through skills enhancement trainings, seminars, other programs and benefits available to OWWA members and their loved ones. A Pag-Ibig representative has likewise provided pertinent information regarding its programs available for them. The Filipino overseas concerned expressed their gratitude for the Embassy's effort in touching base with them. ■

### Athens PE Appreciates Filipino Volunteers in Cyprus



Consul Shemaine Kyriakides (4<sup>th</sup> from left) together with the Filipino volunteer awardees during the awarding ceremony held on 08 December 2013 at the PHC in Nicosia.

Athens PE awarded Certificates of Appreciation to Filipino volunteers in Cyprus during the Embassy's consular outreach mission in Cyprus on 08 December 2013, to celebrate National Volunteer Month.

The certificates were awarded by Mrs. Shemaine Bushnell-Kyriakides, Philippine Honorary Consul in Nicosia on behalf of the Philippine Embassy. The awarding of certificates was initiated by Post to acknowledge the efforts and support extended by the Filipino volunteers in Cyprus during the Embassy's regular consular outreach missions in Nicosia. Athens PE has conducted four (4) consular outreach missions in Nicosia this year.

The eleven (11) volunteers are members of the Filipino community who rendered their assis-

tance and support to the Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Consulate in Nicosia in maintaining orderly consular outreach missions there.

Mrs. Kyriakides was assisted by Acting Labor Attaché and Welfare Officer Sylvia Valdez and ATN Officer Maria Clorinda Bonabon-Dankers during the awarding ceremony. ■

### POEA Administrator Cacdac and Ambassador Montealegre meet with the FilCom in Cyprus



(Right to left) Consul Shemaine Kyriakides, POEA Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac and Ambassador Meynardo Montealegre during the Filcom meeting held on 06 October 2013 at the OFW Reintegration Center in Nicosia, Cyprus. ■