

ENVOY NOW IN MANILA TO OPEN GREECE'S FIRST EMBASSY

19 February 2007- Philippine Ambassador to Greece Rigoberto D. Tiglao reported to the Department of Foreign affairs that H.E. George-Chrysostomos Nicolaidis, Ambassador-designate of the Hellenic Republic to the Philippines, arrived 10 February 2007 in Manila to open Greece's first Embassy in the Philippines.

The opening of Greece's resident mission will be a breakthrough in further developing relations between Greece and the Philippines, Ambassador Tiglao stated.

Filipino officers and staff of about 7,000 make up the biggest nationality of the seamen manning Greek ships, which constitute the biggest merchant marine fleet in the world today.

Tiglao reported that Greek ship owners are hoping that the Philippines will be able to train the many officers and seamen needed to fill up the huge demand for such specialized staff in the next several years. Filipino seamen are very much respected for their skills and integrity by Greek shipping companies, and many Greek ships have Filipinos as the majority of their crew.

There also about 20,000 Filipinos living and/or working in Greece, mainly in the capital Athens and in Greek luxury ships and yachts docked in the adjacent port city of Piraeus. Both are dominantly Christian countries, with many observers saying that Filipinos and Greeks are strikingly similar in their Christian, family-centered, and life-



Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto Romulo and Ambassador Nicolaidis

loving values.

Although diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Greece were established way back in 1947, the establishment of resident missions in Manila and in Athens was firmed up only in 1987 in a meeting in the United Nations headquarters between then Secre-

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President Karolos Papoulias (center) and Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis (left) welcome Ambassador and Madame Tiglao at the traditional New Year's Reception held at the Presidential Palace in Athens.

BUMOTO SA HALALAN 2007!

Ipinapabatid ng Embahada ng Pilipinas sa Gresya sa mga Pilipino sa Gresya na ang 30-araw na botohan sa Halalan 2007 upang makaboto sa Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) at maghalal ng labingdalawang (12) Senador at isang (1) Party List Representative ay magsisimula sa **ika-14 ng Abril** at matatapos sa **ika-14 ng Mayo 2007**. Ang botohan ay gagawin sa Embahada, na matatagpuan sa 26 Antheon St., Paleo Psychico, Athens, Greece.

Hinihikayat ng Embahada ang mga Pilipinong rehistrado sa OAV na bomoto sa itinakdang panahon na eleksyon. Ang mga rehistradong botante ay maaaring bumoto sa loob ng 30 araw bago sumapit ang ika-14 ng Mayo.

Matatapos ang botohan sa ika-14 Mayo sa ganap na 10:00 ng umaga sa Gresya, at 3:00 ng hapon naman sa Pilipinas.

Kaphilca gets permit from Greek gov't

The only RP school in Europe recognized in host country and in the Philippines

The Katipunan Philippines Cultural Academy (Kaphilca) recently obtained a permit for the operation of its school in Athens, Greece.

"This is a milestone in the history and development of Kaphilca, which will benefit the children of our *kababayans* who are enrolled in the school," said Philippine Ambassador to Greece Rigoberto D. Tiglao. Tiglao, who assumed his post on 11 May 2006, had vowed early on that he would prioritize the acquisition of a permit for the 10-year-old school.

Kaphilca was established in 1997 to provide formal education for the dependents of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Athens. The curriculum used is prescribed by the Philippine Department of Education and as such its graduates are recognized by the Philippine

Why study in Kaphilca?

- ✓ It's the only Philippine school recognized by the governments of Greece and the Philippines.
- ✓ You can get automatic admission to schools in the Philippines without need for Department of Education evaluation.
- ✓ The tuition fee is reasonable.
- ✓ The curriculum is approved and prescribed by the Department of Education.
- ✓ Your children grow up without forgetting their history, heritage and culture as Filipinos.

KAPHILCA is located at 64 Pontou Street, Ambelokipi, Athens. Its telephone numbers are 210-7480825 and 6934923950.

school system.

Now with its new permit for operation at hand, Kaphilca is also recognized by the Greek government's Ministry of Education and Reli-

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Spotlight



Rigoberto ("Bobi") Dikit Tiglao was appointed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as Presidential Spokesperson with Cabinet rank on April 23, 2001. He was appointed concurrent Press Secretary on April 1, 2002. After a six-month Research Fellowship in Kyoto University from May to October 2002, he resumed his role as Presidential Spokesperson concurrent with his new appointment as Presidential Chief of Staff.

He assumed the full-time post as Presidential Chief of Staff on December 9, 2002. After almost two years of serving the Office of the President as Chief of Staff, on August 19, 2004, President Arroyo appointed Secretary Tiglao as the Head of the Presidential Management Staff.

He assumed his post as Chief of Mission and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Hellenic Republic, with concurrent jurisdiction over the Republic of Cyprus, on May 11, 2006.

He has a 19-year experience in journalism as a reporter, columnist, and editor in local publications and as correspondent for an international magazine. For his work, he has won four of the most prestigious awards in local and international journalism. He has authored or co-authored six books dealing with the Philippine economy and politics.

He was a regular opinion-page columnist of the Philippine Daily Inquirer from September 2001 until his appointment as Presidential Spokesperson. During that period, he was also Editor-in-Chief and senior Vice President of the news website Inq7.net, the news site of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA7 Network Co. ■

BOOK PUBLICATIONS:

The Philippine Coconut Industry: Export-Oriented Agricultural Growth, Davao City: ARC Publication, 1984.

"The Coconut Industry," in *Political Economy of Philippine Commodities*, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Third World Studies Center, 1983.

"The Consolidation of the Dictatorship", in Javate-de-Dios, Aurora et. al, eds. *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*. Metro Manila: Conspectus Foundation, 1988. "Rebellion from the Barracks" in *Kudeta: The Challenge to Philippine Democracy*. Makati: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1990.

"The Dilemmas of Economic Policymaking in a 'People-Power' State," in Timberman, David, ed., *The Politics of Economic Reform in Southeast Asia: The Experiences of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines*, Makati: Asian Institute of Management, 1992.

"The Economy: Restoration and Global Incorporation" in *Looking Back, Looking Forward: 1996*, Manila: Foundation for Worldwide People Power, 1995. (A project of *Philippine Daily Inquirer* founding chair Eugenia Apostol.)

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Birth: August 27, 1952

Widower of Raquel Edralin-Tiglao

Children: Andrea Raquel, Alexandro Kalayaan, and Ben Siddharta

Married Getsy Selirio April 13, 2002

Political Prisoner, Camp Crame, Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Bonifacio: March 1973 to December 1974.

EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy; Ateneo de Manila and University of the Philippines,

AWARDS:

Best News Reporter for 1983, Catholic Mass Media Awards

Fellow, Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, 1988-1989

Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) for Print Journalism, 1991

Mitsubishi Corp. Foundation's *Asia Economic Journalist of the Year*, 1991.

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE:

Far Eastern Economic Review correspondent, 1989 to 1992. Manila Bureau Chief from 1993 to March 2000. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* was the prestigious Hong Kong-based international news magazine focusing on Asia and owned by Dow Jones & Co, publisher of the *Wall Street Journal* group of newspapers.

Business editor and columnist of the Manila Chronicle from 1986 to 1989. Mr. Tiglao was with the team that reopened the *Manila Chronicle* in 1986 (after it was closed by the dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos in 1972), and made it the best newspaper in the immediate post-People Power years.

Conceptualized, and one of the founders of, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ). Mr. Tiglao conceptualized and proposed the establishment of the center based on a research he did while on his Nieman Fellowship at Harvard. The Center has evolved, since its founding in 1989, as a respected organization for developing professionalism in journalism, especially for in-depth, investigative reportage.

Started career as a journalist in 1981 at the Business Day newspaper. Because it focused on business news, *Business Day* fell through the cracks of martial-law's press-suppression policy, and was a much-respected publication during that period. After its closure due to labor problems in 1987, it was revived as today's *Business World*. Mr. Tiglao covered the labor, stock market industry, and financial beats.

President of the Foreign Correspondents' Association of the Philippines for 1997-1998.

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Mahalagang Mensahe sa mga kababayan natin sa Gresya

MAG-INGAT: HINDI NA BIRO ANG SAKIT SA PUSO!

There has been an alarming number of deaths due to stroke and heart attacks among our kababayans in Greece in the past several months which we cannot simply ignore, as this has claimed the lives of many Filipinos in Greece or wrecked havoc on their dreams of prosperity.



Dra. Helen Marcoyannopoulou Fojas, a renowned Greek-Filipino cardiologist, actually had noticed this unmistakable trend among Filipinos in Greece many years ago. Dr.

Fojas says that other than hereditary factors, this trend is mainly due to the radical change in diet and lifestyle Filipinos undergo when they move from the Philippines to Greece.

▣ Filipinos in Greece have swiftly and radically shifted to diets that result in a quick and massive build up of cholesterol – long proven to be a major cause of blockages in heart arteries.

From eating the traditional healthy diet consisting mainly of rice, vegetables and fish with only some meat, Filipinos here now eat mostly animal meat (souvlaki, pork, lamb, beef) and other food high in fat and cholesterol (butter). Even the portions of pork barbecues served are bigger than the ones back home. It has also been noted that Filipinos here tend to be overweight or outright obese – conditions for the development of heart disease.

There are many studies which have shown that the relatively low rate of heart disease among Greeks may be due to their relatively high consumption of olives (or olive oil) and red wine. However, Filipinos are not fond of olives nor red wine.

▣ While shifting to an unhealthy diet, Filipinos here also have mostly changed their lifestyles and have little time for exercise. Much of Filipinos' free time is spent watching TV or Filipino-movie videos, and some say, in card games (tong-its) lasting for hours. The relatively reliable system of mass transit in Athens also discourages Filipinos from walking, which is one of the best exercises for keeping a healthy heart. This sedentary lifestyle becomes especially pro-

nounced during the winter months.

Sadly, the role of psychological stress cannot be underestimated in the development of heart disease. Stress is known to release certain chemicals in the body that lead to a build up of cholesterol and plaque in arteries. Unfortunately, despite their usually cheerful disposition, many Filipinos here are understandably under undue stress. Stress in performing well at work, in living in a foreign land, in missing their loved ones and worrying if they could make enough money to help them back home.

The combination of a bad diet and a lifestyle with little exercise are an almost sure-fire formula for heart disease. It gets even worse – the risks more than double – if one smokes or drinks alcohol in excess, which reduces the liver's capacity to process food, leading to a build up of fat. Especially if a family lives in small apartments – with the windows more often closed because of the cold – cigarette smoke from smokers in the family have the same impact on everyone's health, as if everyone in the family smokes.

Hindi na biro ang pag-laganap ng sakit sa puso sa mga kababayan natin. Palitan natin ang mga kondisyones para maiwasan ito.

Ang mga ilang kinakailangang gawin upang makaiwas sa sakit sa puso:

♥ **Bawasan ang pagkain ng karne ng anumang uri.** *Piliting kumain ng mas maraming gulay at prutas. Iwasan din ang pagkain ng maraming mga maalat na pagkain.*

♥ **Pilitin nating ibaba ang ating timbang, at iwasan ang pagiging mataba.** *Ang pagiging mataba (waistline of more than 90 centimeters) ay isang kinikilalang kondisyones ng pagkakaroon ng sakit sa puso. Maliban sa kanin, ang mga malakas magpataba ay mga matatamis na kakanin.*

♥ **Itigil ang paninigarilyo.** *Napakaraming mga pag-aaral na ang nagtutukoy sa usok ng sigarilyo bilang sanhi ng pagkakaroon ng sakit sa puso. Kung may kasama kayong naninigarilyo sa bahay – ang asawa niyo halimbawa – payagan lang siyang manigarilyo sa labas ng bahay.*

♥ **Mag-exercise.** *Dapat maski 20 minutos lang baw't araw. Ayon sa mga*

dalubhasa, ang pag-e-exercise ay mistulang gamot para maiwasan ang sakit sa puso. Isipin na lang ninyo na halos libre ang page-exercise, at napakamahal ng gamot at pag-ospital sa Athens!

♥ **Hindi kinakailangang magastos ang uri ng inyong exercise.** *Ang pinakamagaling at libreng exercise: paglalalad. Bumaba sa bus ng malayo-layo sa pinagtatrabahuhan ninyo (o kung pauwi, sa bahay ninyo) para lang makapaglakad at makapag-exercise kayo.*

Napakaimportante rin na magpatingin sa doktor, lalo na sa espesyalista sa puso, kung ikaw ay nasa tinatawag na "high-risk" category, o malamang magkaroon ng sakit sa puso. Napakimportante rin na regular kayong magpa blood test upang malaman kung mataas ang 'cholesterol' ninyo.

Nasa "high-risk category" kayo:

! *Kung sa mga magulang, kapatid o pinsan ninyo ay may nagkasakit or namatay sa sakit sa puso, may diabetes, or may high-blood pressure. Malaking sanhi ng sakit sa puso ay minamana (hereditary). Kapag ganito nga ang situwasyon ninyo, napaka-importante na baguhin na ang pagkain ninyo at magkaroon ng malusog na 'life-style';*

! *Kung kayo ay mataba (waist line over 90 cms.) o kung kayo ay naninigarilyo ng napakaraming taon na. ■*

FREE

Medical Check-ups at Embassy

The Embassy has contracted the free services of Dra. Helen Marcoyannopoulou Fojas, a renowned Greek cardiologist, to undertake medical screenings of Filipinos who are in the 'high-risk' category for developing heart disease.

Dra. Fojas is also a professor and consultant at the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines.

After the check-up, Dra. Fojas will advise Filipinos on what measures they should take to prevent heart-disease or its worsening, or if their heart condition is serious enough to warrant more comprehensive medical attention.

If you are interested in this examination, please phone the Embassy for an appointment with Dra. Fojas at the Embassy every Friday from 3-5 pm starting 20 April 2007. Please contact Ms. Cielo Gamayon or Mr. Mon Garcia at (210) 6721-883 or 6721-837.

Greek envoy (from page 1) tary of Foreign Affairs Raul Manglapus and then Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, now President of the Hellenic Republic.

However, while the Philippines set up its resident mission in Athens in 1988, the Philippines had been covered only from Greece's embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Filipinos traveling to Greece were issued with the appropriate visas by Greece's Jakarta embassy or through the Spanish consulate in Manila.

Tens of thousands of Filipinos who had required visas had to go to Jakarta, which process incurred much expense to them. Many Greek and Filipino businessmen who wanted closer commercial relations between the two dominantly Christian countries were discouraged because of the absence of a Greek embassy in Manila.

Ambassador Tiglao said that veteran New Democracy Party parliamentarian, Member of Parliament represent-

ing the prefecture of Drama in Northern Greece Stavros Daliakis had expressed keen interest in the opening of the Greek embassy in Manila.

In August, Senator Daliakis brought Ambassador Tiglao, together with Greek businessman Yorgos Psinakis and Greek-American entrepreneur Nikos Gitsis to meet with ranking Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials on the subject of the Greek embassy in Manila. Among these ranking MFA officials were MFA deputy minister Evripides Stylianides, and Mr. Dimitrios Zafriadis, the chief of staff of Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis.

Ambassador Nicolaidis informally informed Ambassador Tiglao of his designation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the ambassador to Manila in September, saying that he was very happy about his new posting, as he has had a keen interest in Southeast Asia and in the Philippines.

Since September, Ambassa-

dor Tiglao also had several dinner meetings with Ambassador Nicolaidis together with other Greek friends of the Philippines to brief him on the Greece-Philippine relations, and to acquaint him on the Philippines.

Ambassador Nicolaidis was in Manila for a week last November to assess the logistical requirements for opening up the Greek embassy. Ambassador Nicolaidis will be joined by his wife Alcmene, a former banker. Madame Alcmene hails from Drama prefecture in northern Greece.

Ambassador Tiglao said that the opening up of the Greek embassy in Manila would be invaluable in developing business between the Philippines and Greece. Among Greek products that have much potential in the Philippines are olive oil, wine, and cheese. The Philippines on the other hand could be a big exporter to Greece of furniture (especially for its restaurants and *tavernas*), high-

value garments, coffee, and processed tuna products, the latter two of which Greece has already imported, although in small amounts, from our country.

Tiglao said that with the rapid increase in Greece's affluent and middle class in the past ten years, the Philippines with its island resorts and its famed hospitality could be a major tropical tourist destination for Greeks, especially during its fall and winter seasons.

Born in Athens in 1947, Ambassador Nicolaidis is a veteran diplomat, with a rank of Minister Plenipotentiary First Class, and has been in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1974. His recent postings as head of mission have been in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1997 and to the Republic of Slovenia in 2001. He was head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate for South America and the Caribbean in 2005, and of the Directorate for North America last year.

Kaphilca (from page 1)

gious Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy on 23 November 2006 about the approval, and the Philippine Embassy in Greece received a copy of the permit on behalf of Kaphilca.

"We appreciate the cooperation of the Greek government and its ministries in the fulfillment of this endeavour. We are confident this will lead to a further growth in the bonds between the two countries," Ambassador Tiglao said.

Kaphilca operates under the aegis of the Philippine Embassy in Athens, Greece headed by Ambassador Tiglao. Its supervision is under the Commission of Filipino Overseas which is directly under the Office of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The current director of the school is Mr. Roberto B. Fresnido, former principal of the Philippine School in Doha, Qatar, and teacher at the Philippine Science High School in Manila.

The graduates of Kaphilca are automatically admitted to schools in the Philippines, as there is no need for further



Kaphilca Director Roberto Fresnido (seated, second from right) and the teachers of Kaphilca.

evaluation by the Department of Education. This is a tremendous advantage for the children that should not be overlooked by their parents, Ambassador Tiglao added.

In addition, Kaphilca's curricula ensures that the children of OFWs in Greece do not forget their origins and heritage despite never having lived in the Philippines, as Philippine culture, values, nationalism and identity are highlighted. The teaching of the Greek language is included in order to help the children

integrate into Greek society.

Ambassador Tiglao recalled that before he left for Greece last May, he met with former President Fidel V. Ramos to discuss the problems and potentials of Kaphilca. "He told me to take care of the school and ensure its continued operation," Ambassador Tiglao said. Former President Ramos helped establish the school in 1997 following his State Visit to Greece that year. He helped

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Philippine Embassy: *Kabalikat* ng OFWs sa Greece at Cyprus

With the enactment of Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, assisting Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs) has become one of the highest priority concerns of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Philippine Foreign Service.

Philippine Foreign Service Posts accomplish this mandate through its Assistance-to-Nationals (ATN) Sections in countries with large concentrations of OFWs. The ATN is tasked with upholding the fundamental rights, the provision of protection, and the promotion of the welfare and dignity of overseas Filipinos, in accordance with the laws of the Philippines, the host country, and internationally-recognized agreements.

In 2006, the Philippine Embassy in Athens provided various forms of assistance ranging from counseling to hospital and jail visitations, to repatriation and financial assistance to distressed *kababayans* in Greece as well as in Cyprus, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Philippine Embassy in Athens.

GREECE

At the start of 2006, the DFA, on the recommendation of the Philippine Embassy, assisted the bereaved family and friends of **Mrs. Revelita Jacob**, an OFW in Athens who died of acute pulmonary failure on 09 January 2006, by shouldering the cost of her interment in Athens since her family in the Philippines did not have the financial capacity to have her remains repatriated to Nueva Ecija.

From May 2006 until the end of the year, several Filipinos victimized by the **illegal recruitment** schemes perpetrated by Maricel Bellen applied for, and were issued, new Philippine passports by the Philippine Embassy. The Philippine Embassy likewise sought the assistance of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in bringing this illegal recruiter to justice.

Acting on the endorsement of the Embassy, financial assistance was extended by the DFA to **Mrs. Nida Burgos**, an OFW in Athens whose husband, Jose, also an OFW in Athens, died in October 2006; and to **Ms. Abi-**

gail Napagal, an OFW in Athens who was diagnosed with acute leukemia in June 2006 and who has since been in and out of the hospital. The Embassy, through the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, also requested the Spanish Embassy in Manila to immediately issue an appropriate entry visa to Abigail's mother, Mrs. Lourdes Llander, to enable her to travel to Greece and take care of her ailing daughter.

The year 2006 also saw several Filipino seafarers on board Greek-owned vessels and other foreign-owned ships becoming sick, figuring in accidents, or succumbing to illness. Philippine Embassy officials visited injured *Pinoy* seafarers in hospitals, monitored their condition, and ensured that their employers shouldered their hospitalization in Greece and their immediate repatriation to the Philippines.

The Philippine Embassy also facilitated in the repatriation of the remains of a number of Filipino seafarers, by ensuring that appropriate assistance would be provided by their employers and concerned Philippine government agencies to their bereaved families.

Among the seafarers whose case was closely monitored by the Embassy concerned **Mr. Marlex Valerio**, a crewmember of a German-owned cruise liner, Aida Cruises, who underwent bypass surgery in July 2006 at the Euro-clinic Athens following a heart attack on board the ship.

In September 2006, Philippine Embassy officials, together with the Welfare Officer, assisted and attended to the needs of seafarers **Cesar Mariñas** and **Tranquillino Guanco, Jr.**, crewmembers of Greek-owned tanker MT NOYNOY, both of whom sustained serious burn injuries while doing welding jobs on board the vessel.

Mrs. Magnolia Mariñas, wife of Cesar, was immediately issued an entry visa by the Spanish Embassy in Manila on the request of the DFA and the Philippine Embassy in Greece. Sadly, Mr. Mariñas succumbed to multiple-burns after nineteen days of confinement at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Gennimatas Hospital in Athens. Embassy and OWWA officials regularly visited Mr.

(Continued on page 7)

CYPRUS Corner



Ambassador Tiglao Presents

Credentials to President of Cyprus

His Excellency Philippine Ambassador to Greece Rigoberto D. Tiglao presented his credentials as non-resident Ambassador of the Philippines to the Republic of Cyprus to H.E. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, on 29 September 2006 at the Presidential Palace in Nicosia.

In his presentation speech, Ambassador Tiglao underscored the continued growth and expansion of bilateral relations between the Philippines and Cyprus since establishing diplomatic relations on 06 March 1980. He also conveyed the **Philippine Government's** appreciation for the trust and confidence accorded to Filipino workers in Cyprus, thousands of which are employed in Cypriot-owned ships and vessels.

During the customary tête-à-tête following the presentation ceremony, Ambassador Tiglao conveyed the warm greetings of H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to President Papadopoulos. He also conveyed the desire of the Philippine Government to open a labor office in Cyprus to attend to the welfare of Filipinos working in Cyprus following the resignation of Mrs. Vanthoula Tsaousis-Constantinides as Philippine Honorary Consul in Cyprus.

President Papadopoulos was delighted to note that the excellent friendly ties between **the Philippines and Cyprus "are being reinforced** by the presence of a significant number of Filipino nationals working in Cyprus and particularly by Filipino seafarers, who play an important part in the development of **Cyprus' maritime industry."** He also attributed the strengthened ties between the two countries to **Cyprus' entry in the ASEAN-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2004.**

The ceremony was attended by officials of the Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **Ambassador Tiglao's wife Madame Getsy S. Tiglao** was also in attendance at the initial presentation ceremony and was likewise introduced to President Papadopoulos and the other officials of the Cyprus government. ■

Community News



The Philippine Embassy hosted a Christmas Party for about 60 Accredited Community Partners (ACP) and Leaders of the Filipino Community in Greece on 22 December 2006 at the premises of the Embassy. The fun-filled night included singing and parlor games. Each guest was also given a Philippine flag lapel pin.

(Counterclockwise, from top): Ambassador Tiglao and Madame Getsy Tiglao together with Leaders of the Filipino Community look on as Embassy Officers and staff serenade the guests; Embassy officers and staff singing "Ang Pasko ay Sumapit"; Guests enjoy a sumptuous feast of Filipino food prepared by the Embassy officers and staff. ■



We welcome Pinoy news!

Any newsworthy events in your area about Pinoy or Pinoy groups? Want to make a comment or letter to the editor? You can send us your letters, news stories, press or photo releases for publication in PhilippiNews! Our mailing address: Editorial Staff-PhilippiNews
c/o The Philippine Embassy
26 Antheon St., Paleo Psychico 154 52
Athens, Greece

You can also contact telephone numbers 210-6721883 or 210-6721837; fax number 210-6721872; or send e-mail to philembnewsletter@athenspe.net or athenspe@otenet.gr.

The Philippine Embassy welcomes...



G. EDUVALA,
new Labor Attaché
to Greece

Atty. George Eduvala assumed his duties and responsibilities as the new Labor Attaché to Greece on 26 January 2007.

He began his government service in 1973 at the Supreme Court before transferring to the Department of Labor and Employment

(DOLE) in 1974.

He is a Career Executive Service eligible and has served in various postings starting in 1983 (Guam, Oman, Taiwan, the Netherlands and Japan). In the home base, he also served as a labor arbiter of the Department of Labor and Employment and was the Legal Adviser to the Labor Secretary and head of the Department's Legal Service prior to his posting to Greece.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Sto. Tomas and graduated Cum Laude from the San Beda College with a

Bachelor of Laws. He was a third-placer in the Bar Examination in 1972. He taught at the Arellano College of Law while working at DOLE.

He is a recipient of the 1973 Order of Sikatuna from the San Beda College, and was among the recipients of the Outstanding Alumni Award from the UST's Faculty of Arts and Letters in 1991.

He was born in Masinloc, Zambales on 13 February 1947 and is married to Adelaida Mangahas. They have three children. ■



J. GIMENEZ,
new Labor Attaché
to Cyprus

Atty. Jaime P. Gimenez arrived in Athens on 26 February 2007 enroute to assuming his duties as the new Labor Attaché to Cyprus.

He studied at the Notre Dame Training

School And High School in Cotabato; graduated from the San Beda College with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Commerce, major in Accounting; and Bachelor of Laws from Ateneo de Davao University.

He passed the bar examination in 1981.

After practicing law from 1972-1986, he entered government service through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) as Director of Welfare and Adjudica-

tion Office. He established the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in 1994 where he served for two years before being posted to Tripoli, Libya as Labor Attaché in 1994. He assisted in the evacuation of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) from Lebanon during the July 2006 crisis.

He was born in Manila on 21 June 1952. ■

Philippine Embassy (from page 5)

Guanco while he was recovering from his injuries at the Gennimatas Hospital before being repatriated to the Philippines on 18 January 2007. Before 2006 ended, Embassy officials assisted two Filipinas, Mesdames **Rubilyn Dilarte** and **Adrielyn Absalon**, who were apprehended at the Athens El Venizelos Airport on 10 November 2006 for carrying fake travel documents. The two were detained at the Immigration Police Detention Center in Petrou Raly, while Embassy officials worked on their immediate deportation to the Philippines to avoid long-term imprisonment in Greece for violation of immigration laws. Both were repatriated to Manila on 12 December 2006.

CYPRUS

Although there is no Philippine Embassy in Cyprus, the Philippine Embassy in Athens never fails to attend to the consular and welfare needs of our *kababayans* in Cyprus. With the help of OFW volunteers there, the Embassy is able to provide necessary assistance to Filipinos in Cyprus. Although a Philippine Honorary Consulate has been appointed in Nicosia, the office is not yet functioning pending acceptance by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

In September 2006, **Ms. Cristina Tajon**, a jobless and penniless OFW in Nicosia, sought the Embassy's assistance for the immediate repatriation to the Philippines for her and her month-old daughter, Marianne. The DFA, on the Embassy's endorsement, shouldered their airfares. On 01 October 2006, the Tajons left for the Philippines on board Emirates Airlines.

Embassy officials also traveled to Cyprus in mid-November 2006 to ascertain the

circumstances surrounding the deaths of OFWs **Mr. Leo Cernal** and **Ms. Janet Valdez** as well as seal their caskets. Mr. Cernal was found dead in his flat in Limassol on 15 November which police said was alleged suicide. Ms. Valdez, on the other hand, perished in a car accident on 18 November 2006. To date, the Embassy continues to monitor these cases and has sought the assistance of the Cyprus Government in investigating the cases.

The Embassy also conducted two Consular Outreach Missions to Cyprus following the resignation of the Philippine Honorary Consul to Cyprus in September 2006. The consular team issued a total of 255 passports and 30 documentations (notarials and authentication services) and attended to several ATN and welfare cases.

SUMMARY

In 2006, the Philippine Embassy, together with OWWA, coordinated in the repatriation to the Philippines of 20 OFWs who died in Greece and Cyprus, as well as 2 OFWs who were buried in Greece and 1 in Cyprus. On a daily basis, the Embassy's ATN Section attends to OFWs who go to the Embassy seeking counseling and assistance regarding personal, employment and immigration-related problems.

In 2007, the Embassy aims to strengthen its capability in handling ATN and welfare cases in order to assist its *kababayans* more effectively and efficiently.

(Assisting OFWs in Greece and Cyprus is a joint undertaking by the Embassy's ATN Section and the Philippine Labor Office (POLO). The POLO is an attached agency from the Department of Labor.) ■

Kaphilca (from page 4)

provide the initial start-up fund from the President's Social Fund. Kaphilca began operating with the assistance of the Philippine Embassy in Athens, the CFO, and the Filipino community.

With regards other Filipino learning centers operating in Athens without permits, Ambassador Tiglaos said that the Philippine Embassy in Greece is open for talks towards possible integration into the Kaphilca school. He said this would help ensure a better future for Filipino schoolchildren as they will graduate from a school that is officially recognized in both the Philippines and Greece. ■

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Philippine Embassy Launches Official Website

Beginning March 2007, *Pinoys* across Greece and Cyprus, and around the globe, will have immediate access to the Philippine Embassy's services through the Embassy's official website, www.athenspe.net.

The website contains information on consular, labor and welfare matters, news updates about the Philippines and activities of the Embassy and the Filipino Community. Application forms can also be downloaded from this site.

The Embassy website is just one of our many projects aimed at improving our services to our *kababayans* here in Greece and in Cyprus. So, what are you waiting for? Visit www.athenspe.net now!

Philippine Overseas Labor Office

Filipino Workers Resource Center (FWRC)
63-A Katechaki Street, Neo Psychico, Athens
Tels.: (210)6983335, (210)6982871, (210)6728256



ATTY. GEORGE A. EDUVALA
Labor Attaché (Greece)



ATTY. JAIME P. GIMENEZ
Labor Attaché (Cyprus)



JOCELYN O. HAPAL
Welfare Officer



JEAN V. SANTOS
PAG-IBIG Representative



CARLOS P. MONTENEGRO
Administrative Assistant, POLO

How to identify an illegal recruiter

Kilalanin ang illegal recruiter!

Ang illegal recruiter ay:

- agad naniningil ng placement fee o anumang kaulang bayad nang walang resibo
- nangangako ng madaliang pag-alis patungo sa ibang bansa
- nagre-require agad ng medical examination o training kahit wala pang malinaw na employer o kontrata
- nakikipag-transaksiyon sa mga aplikante sa mga pampublikong lugar tulad ng restaurant, mall, at-bpa. at hindi sa opisina ng lisensyadong ahensiya
- bahay-bahay kung mag-

recruit ng mga aplikante

- hindi nagbibigay ng sapat na impormasyon tungkol sa ina-aplayang trabaho
- nagsasabi na may kausap na direct employer at ang mga aplikante ay di na kailangang dumaan sa POEA
- nangangako ng mabilis na pag-alis ng aplikante gamit ang tourist o visit visa
- walang maipakitang employment contract o working visa
- nagpapakilala na empleyado ng isang lisensyadong recruitment

agency ngunit walang maipakitang ID

- nagpapakilala na konektado sa isang travel agency o training center
- nanghihikayat sa mga aplikante na mangalap ng iba pang aplikante upang mapabilis ang pagpa-paalis
- walang maibigay na sapat at tamang impormasyon tungkol sa sarili tulad ng buong pangalan o address
- nangangako na ang mga dokumento ay ipapasok sa POEA para maiprocess (lalo na sa kaso ng EPS-Korea)
- hihikayatin ka dahil nakapag-paalis na ng isa o higit pa gamit ay tourist visa

OFW TIPS:

How to Avoid Illegal Recruitment

1. Do not apply at recruitment agencies not licensed by POEA.
2. Do not deal with licensed agencies without job orders.
3. Do not deal with any person who is not an authorized representative of a licensed agency.
4. Do not transact business outside the registered address of the agency. If recruitment is conducted in the province, check if the agency has a provincial recruitment authority.
5. Do not pay more than the allowed placement fee. It should be equivalent to one month salary, exclusive of documentation and processing costs.
6. Do not pay any placement fee unless you have a valid employment contract and an official receipt.
7. Do not be enticed by ads or brochures requiring you to reply to a Post Office (P.O.) Box, and to enclose payment for processing of papers.
8. Do not deal with training centers and travel agencies, which promise overseas employment.
9. Do not accept a tourist visa.
10. Do not deal with fixers.

Modus Operandi of Illegal Recruiters

- ! Escort Services – Undocumented workers are "escorted" by corrupt government staff at the airport or any international exit to evade checkpoints set up to check on the documents of workers.
- ! Tourist-Worker Scheme – Workers leave the country posing as tourists but are actually deployed as workers abroad.
- ! Assumed Identity – Workers, particularly minors (less than 21 years old), are deployed abroad under an assumed identity.
- ! Trainee Worker Scheme – Hired workers are deployed allegedly not for employment but for training purposes only, and will return to sending company after training.
- ! Backdoor Points Scheme – Workers travel abroad not through regular exit channels like airports, but through such means as cargo ships.
- ! Tie-Up System – Unlicensed recruiters with blacklisted foreign principals, use the names and offices of licensed recruiters in their illegal activity.
- ! Visa Assistance/Consultancy Scheme – Firms that offer services including the pairing of workers with foreign employers and promising applicants immigrant visas but are in reality engaged in the recruitment business. ■

Mag-impok at Magkabay sa Pag-IBIG

Ipinakilala ng Pag-IBIG Fund ang isang programang tutulong sa mga Pilipinong nasa ibang bansa para makapag-impok sa kanilang kinabukasan, at makapagpatayo ng sariling bahay sa ilalim ng isang abot-kayang housing program.

Ang Pag-IBIG Overseas Program o POP ay isang voluntary savings scheme na bukas sa lahat ng Pilipino na nagtatrabaho o permanenteng naninirahan sa ibang bansa, immigrants at seafarers. Sa pamamagitan ng pag-impok ng maliit na halaga kada buwan, maari nang magkaroon ng housing loan na nagkakahalaga ng hanggang 2 milyong piso.

Ang isang miyembro ng Pag-IBIG ay maaring maghulog ng halagang katumbas ng US\$5 bilang monthly savings, o kaya'y lump sum na katumbas ng 24 na buwanang impok. Ang buwanang hulog ay kumikita ng dibidendo taun-taon na hindi pinapatawan ng buwis.

Maaaring ma-withdraw ang accumulated savings pagkaraan ng 5, 10, 15, o 20 taon na pag-impok, depende sa membership term na pinili ninyo nang kayo ay magpre-histro bilang miyembro. Maari ring ma-withdraw kung sakaling ang miyembro ay pumanaw ang buhay, tuluyang nabaladado, o natanggal sa serbisyo dahil sa problema sa kalusugan.

Para maging Pag-IBIG member, magtungo kay Ms. Jean V. Santos, POP Officer, sa POLO-FWRC. Ang address ay 63-A Katechaki St. Neo Psychico, Athens at ang telepono ay 210-6983265. Sagutan ang Member's Data Form at i-submit kasama ang 1"x1" ID photo at ang tamang kontribusyon. ■