

Filipino

An official publication of the
Commission on Filipinos Overseas
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Ties

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Philippine Schools Overseas hold Seventh Conference in Dubai

The Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas (IACPSO), in cooperation with the Philippine Consulate General and the United International Private School in Dubai, organized the Seventh conference of Philippine Schools Overseas at the Flora Grand Hotel, Dubai, United Arab Emirates on 10-11 May 2008.

The Conference was opened by Consul General Benito Valeriano of the Philippine Consulate General in Dubai, Assistant Secretary Teresita G. Inciong of the Department of Education (DepEd), Director Carmelina Velasquez of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and Secretary Dante A. Ang of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) as the keynote speaker.

Officers of the Philippine Consulate General in Dubai and United International Private School – Dubai were also present.

The two-day conference, themed “Setting Standards, Raising Achievements”, was attended by 46 participants from 22 Philippine schools in Greece, Libya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. It was held to discuss policy directions for IACPSO and other education-program initiatives.

Assistant Secretary Inciong, Dr. Yolanda Quijano and Ms. Josefina Mariano of DepEd conducted lectures and facilitated discussions on Education Initiatives for Raising Achievement, Standards in the Elementary Education and Refinement of Secondary Curriculum.

The conference included workshops for school managers, administrators, owners, and principals aimed at refocusing the roles of the governing council. There was also a parallel discussion on teachers’ education development programs anchored on the national competency-based teachers’ standards.



Secretary Ang delivering his speech during the conference.

See *Philippine schools*, page 10

Filipino-Germans provide scholarship assistance



Secretary Dante A. Ang (seated) of the CFO and Ms. Cecilia C. Wollenweber of Deutsch-Philippischer Kulturkreis e.V. during the turn-over of cash donation at the CFO on 8 February 2008. Present during the ceremony were (from left) CFO Executive Director Jennifer O. Gonzales, Ms. Criscencia Busch of Deutsch-Philippischer Kulturkreis e.V., Ms. Norma and Bro. Tim Duran of ANAWIM Lay Foundation, Inc., John Edward T. Dela Cruz and Ericson T. Encarnacion (Scholars), Training Director Pedro Cajanding, Jr. of Don Bosco Youth Center and CFO Director Minda I. Cabilao-Valencia.

LINKAPIL donations reach 2nd quarter high

Donations to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas’ *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL) or Link for Philippine Development Program have reached a record high. From January to June 2008 alone, P130 million worth of assistance was distributed to more than 150,000 beneficiaries in 33 provinces nationwide, and Metro Manila.

The LINKAPIL program was established in 1989 to manage the influx of donations for communities affected by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and the earthquake in Luzon in the early 1990s. The program is composed of five components: education, micro-enterprise / livelihood, health and welfare, small-scale infrastructure and transfer of skills and technology. About P2.15 billion worth of assistance has been coursed through LINKAPIL since its inception. To date, over 14 million people in 78 provinces and Metro Manila have benefited from the selflessness and love/patriotism of overseas Filipinos.

In 2007, almost P103 million worth of donations was used in the construction of 23 new classrooms in 12 provinces, water system in Southern Leyte and Muntinlupa City, feeding programs, and other projects.

See *Lingkod sa Kapwa*, page 10

Filipino designer wins London's *Project Catwalk*



Jasper Garvida (right, with show host Kelly Osbourne)

As Filipino designers Monique Lhuillier and Rafe Totengco continue to enjoy success in their careers, another Filipino is making waves in the fashion industry half a world away. Jasper Garvida, a Filipino-Canadian fashion designer bested tough global competition to win the Sky One Television prime-time reality program *Project Catwalk* in London. Kelly Osbourne, the host of *Project Catwalk*, praised Garvida's victory saying "We have found the UK's next biggest designer "

The reality show competition, now on its 12th year, gives 12 talented fashion designers (chosen from some 3,000 applicants) the opportunity of a lifetime—a chance to have their collection shown at the prestigious London Fashion Week. After nine grueling weeks of various challenges, the three remaining finalists

were asked to create a 12-piece women's wear collection on the show's final, from which a winner will be declared.

Each of the three finalists was given £5,000 to purchase all necessary materials including fabric, accessories and additional labor components. They are also taken to a place of their choice whose architecture, atmosphere, colors and history are expected to inspire their final collection.

The judges faced a very tough decision, but Garvida's talent, flair for detail and passion shone through. He won an exclusive deal with online style boutique Oli, a £25,000 cash prize, as well as a spread in *Grazia*—the iconic, world-renowned fashion magazine covering top designers and trends.

Garvida, one of seven siblings born to Ilocano parents, grew up in Quezon City, and migrated to Canada when he was 12. His father is a lawyer while his mother is an accountant. The 31-year-old Filipino-Canadian graduated from the art and design school Central Saint Martins in 2004. Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design remains to be one of London's most revered art institutions, with strong research and teaching departments in Fine Arts, Fashion, Graphics, 3D design and Performance. It has produced the likes of Gilbert and George, Richard Long, Jeff Banks—designer and presenter of BBC's *The Clothes Show*, 007 Pierce Brosnan and fashion designer Paul Smith.



Some of Garvida's works

Source: PDI

Over 3,000 Filipinos and Friends of the Philippines packed this year's *Pista sa Paris 2008* at the open air *Stade de la Muette* in Paris last 06 July. The theme of this year's *Pista sa Paris* was *Katutubong Pilipino*.

A festive parade with Filipinos in colorful Filipinana attire, *ati-atihan*, or ethnic garb kicked off from *Place Trocadero*. Ambassador Jose Abeto Zaide and the officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy in Paris led the 45-minute walk from *Place Trocadero* to *Stade de la Muette*. They were joined by representatives of Filipino community organizations in Paris. The revelry of the *ati-atihan* and other street dancers spiced up the parade. Adding glitter to the festivity were the contestants of the *Ms. Floral Parade 2008*.

Artistically decorated booths stood at the *Stade* grounds, offering mouth watering Filipino dishes and an array of quality handicrafts and services. The Philippine Embassy booth provided information on its consular



Photo credit: Munting Nayon Netherlands online news magazine

services, tourist destinations in the Philippines, and Filipino films being screened at the ongoing *Paris Cinema Festival*.

Matinee idol Piolo Pascual, who was in Paris for the *Paris Cinema Festival*, made a special appearance at the *Pista*, thrilling the Filipino audience.

The Core Group Organizers decided that proceeds from the *Pista sa Paris 2008* will be donated to the victims of typhoon Frank in the Philippines. Last year's proceeds went to the *Adopt-a-School Program*

of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

Now on its 28th year, the *Pista sa Paris* is an annual event that showcases the country's rich cultural heritage and traditions. It aims to foster camaraderie and unity amongst Filipinos in Paris, in particular, and in France in general.

Source: DFA

Presidential Awardee tops international ice carving competition

Multi-awarded chef and ice-carver Armando Baisas, recipient of the 2006 Pamana ng Pilipino Award of the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, once again proved his mettle on ice when he bagged the first place in the pairs category of the Casino du Lac-Leamy Crystal Garden 21st International Ice-Carving competition held in Ottawa on February 01, 2008. Sharing the honor with him is his nephew Ross Baisas, a testament that skill and talent indeed runs in the family.

The duo's "Tunggalian" (The Encounter) entry also earned the People's Choice award, besting 24 other participants in the category. The ice carving, completed in 30 hours of non-stop work, depicts the Filipino hero, Lapu-Lapu, in fierce fight with the Spanish conqueror Magellan. The competition is part of the Winterlude winter festival in Ottawa and Gatineau organized by the National Capital Commission of Canada. The festival is one of Ottawa's most important tourist draws, attracting thousands of visitors each year.

Born and raised in Paete, Laguna, a city known for skills in carving, Chef Baisas received his Culinary Arts diploma in 1981 from the Samson Technical Fashion School in Manila. His excellence in his craft caught the attention of the Hilton International Hotels Group where he established a reputation as kitchen artist and garde manger, working in Hilton hotels in the Philippines, Kenya, Cyprus, Egypt and Sudan. In 1987, he moved to North America and took the position of Chef Decorateur / Garde-Manger at the Vista International Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He then moved to Bonaventure Hilton International and to Hotel Vogue in Montreal, Quebec shortly after. It was in 1993 when he joined the staff of the Montreal Casino, where his talent as a sculptor was showcased.

Chef Baisas' list of awards in culinary sculpting is extensive. He won second place in 1988 under the category of Centerpiece Overall at the Culinary Salon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1991, he placed second in the Winterlude International Ice Carving Competition in Ottawa, Ontario. In 1992 and 1993,



Mr. Romeo Baisas poses with his award winning entry.

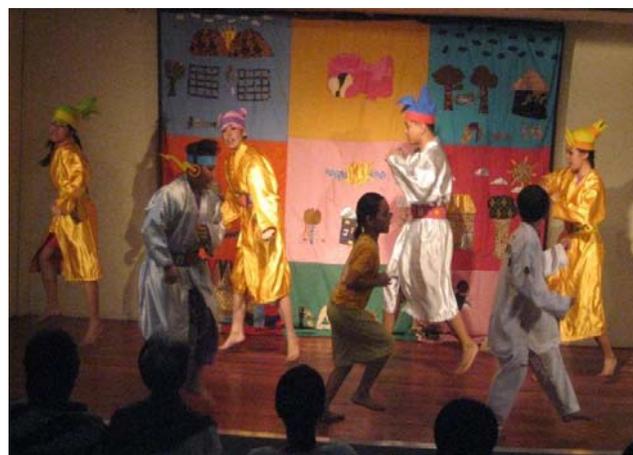
he won first place at the Individual Ice Carving Competition held in Plymouth Michigan and the gold medal and trophy as overall winner at the Salon Rendezvous in Montreal, Quebec, respectively. He also went on to duplicate his feat in Plymouth, Michigan in 1993 by winning the prestigious Carver's Choice Award at the International Ice Sculpture Competition.

In 2005, he continued his dominance in ice sculpting at the Winterlude International Ice Carving Competition, winning the first place and People's Choice Award. In the same year, he placed third in the National Restaurant Association Ice Carving Classic. He then traveled to North Korea to train government chefs in Pyongyang on carving and plate decoration. Since 2000, Chef Baisas has been affiliated with Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Culinary Arts Institute as master chef sculptor/instructor. This Paetenian has certainly come a long way.

Source: DFA

NCCA and CFO extend support for DAWN's Teatro Akebono Japan Tour

Recognizing its relevance in advancing the cause of Japanese-Filipino children (JFCs), the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), through the endorsement of the CFO, extended sponsorship for the 2008 Teatro Akebono Japan Tour organized by the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN). The fund provided by the NCCA totalling P148,000 was used to cover the cost of the railway passes of the 10-member delegation



The cast of Teatro Akebono's "The JFC World" onstage.

around Japan. The CFO was designated by the NCCA to serve as fund manager of the grant after endorsing the project.

NCCA Executive Director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez informed CFO Chairman Dante A. Ang that the NCCA Board of

Commissioners approved the financial assistance during its meeting on April 25, 2008.

DAWN, headed by its Executive Director Carmelita G. Nuqui, is a non-government development organization established in 1996 to assist migrant Filipino women in Japan and their Japanese-Filipino children in the promotion and protection of their human rights and welfare.

In an effort to further the cause of the JFCs, DAWN ventured into theater in 1997, mainly to conduct theater workshops aimed to provide a venue for the children to express their thoughts and feelings as they deal with the separation from their Japanese fathers, and discrimination from their friends or neighbors due to their mixed parentage. The workshops culminated in their first musical play, *Fujiwara Junko: JFC*.

Because of the success of the workshops and the subsequent plays, DAWN included the women / mothers of the children in the activities. With their collective and individual efforts, Teatro Akebono was born. For most of the JFCs, the visit to Japan also provides them with the opportunity to meet their Japanese fathers for the first time.

For its 10th year offering, Teatro Akebono presented the musical play, "The JFC World" staged in six prefectures in Japan from May 1-17, 2008. It is a fantasy play revolving around the story of a Filipino girl who dreams of becoming a Japanese and a Japanese boy who wants to become a Filipino.

See Teatro Akebono, page 10

Filipinos in intermarriage

Filipinos warned against mail-order bride schemes

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) warns Filipinos against illegal activities of groups who intentionally recruit and match women with foreigners looking for brides. These marriage brokers, which allegedly operate in the guise of recruitment agencies, deceive their clients by convincing them that getting work abroad is easier if they leave as spouses of foreigners, or that their foreign spouses will be able to provide support for their families left behind in the Philippines.

Recently, two Filipina victims leaving for South Korea were intercepted at separate incidents by CFO officers and immigration authorities. Found in their possession were fake guidance and counseling certificates and an emigrant registration sticker affixed on the passport. Both later admitted to paying at least ten thousand pesos to the marriage broker in order to obtain their fake documents, aside from the payment given by their Korean husbands. Further investigation also revealed that the marriage licenses and certificates which were produced by their brokers were spurious.

By law, all Filipinos leaving the country as partners or spouses of foreign nationals are required to register with and undertake the Guidance and Counseling Program of the CFO. Successful participants receive a CFO counseling certificate, which is required in applying for, amending or renewing passports with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) as spouses / partners of foreign nationals. Most foreign embassies such as the United States and South Korea also require attendance in the counseling program when applying for spouse or fiancé / fiancée visas.

At present, the Guidance and Counseling Program is conducted only by CFO's authorized counseling providers namely, the St. Mary Euphrasia Foundation – Center for Overseas Workers (SMEF-COW) and the People's Reform Initiative for Social Mobilization (PRISM). Details about the program can be obtained from CFO's website at www.cfo.gov.ph.

Philippine Ambassador to South Korea Luis T. Cruz also reiterated the Philippine Embassy's warning to Filipinos against agencies that act as a front for mail-order brides following reports that the South Korean Government is seriously set to go after interracial matchmaking agencies that violate local laws and use deceptive advertising.

The Philippine Embassy reminds the public of Republic Act 6955 or the Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law, which makes it illegal for a "person, natural or juridical, association, club or any other entity" to "establish or carry on a business which has for its purpose the matching of Filipino women for marriage to foreign nationals either on a mail-order basis or through personal introduction." The law also makes it illegal for anyone "to advertise, publish, print or distribute or cause the advertisement, publication, printing or distribution of any brochure, flier, or any propaganda material calculated to promote the prohibited acts" earlier mentioned. Further amendments included its applicability to mail-order bride schemes using "emails or websites in the internet."

See Filipinos warned, page 10

Trends and patterns of marriage migration from the Philippines

Available data indicate that the top four country destinations of Filipino marriage migrants are the US, Japan, Australia and Canada. The US continues to host the largest marriage migration stream from the Philippines. In 1995, Japan surpassed the United States for being the top destination country for Filipino spouses. For Australia, the number of Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals peaked in 1989 and a fluctuating trend is apparent after said year. The number of Filipino spouses and partners of Canadian nationals fluctuated and peaked in 2006. Besides the USA, Japan, Australia and Canada, other top ten destination countries for Filipino spouses and fiancés include Germany, Taiwan, UK, South Korea, Norway and Sweden (see Figure 1.)

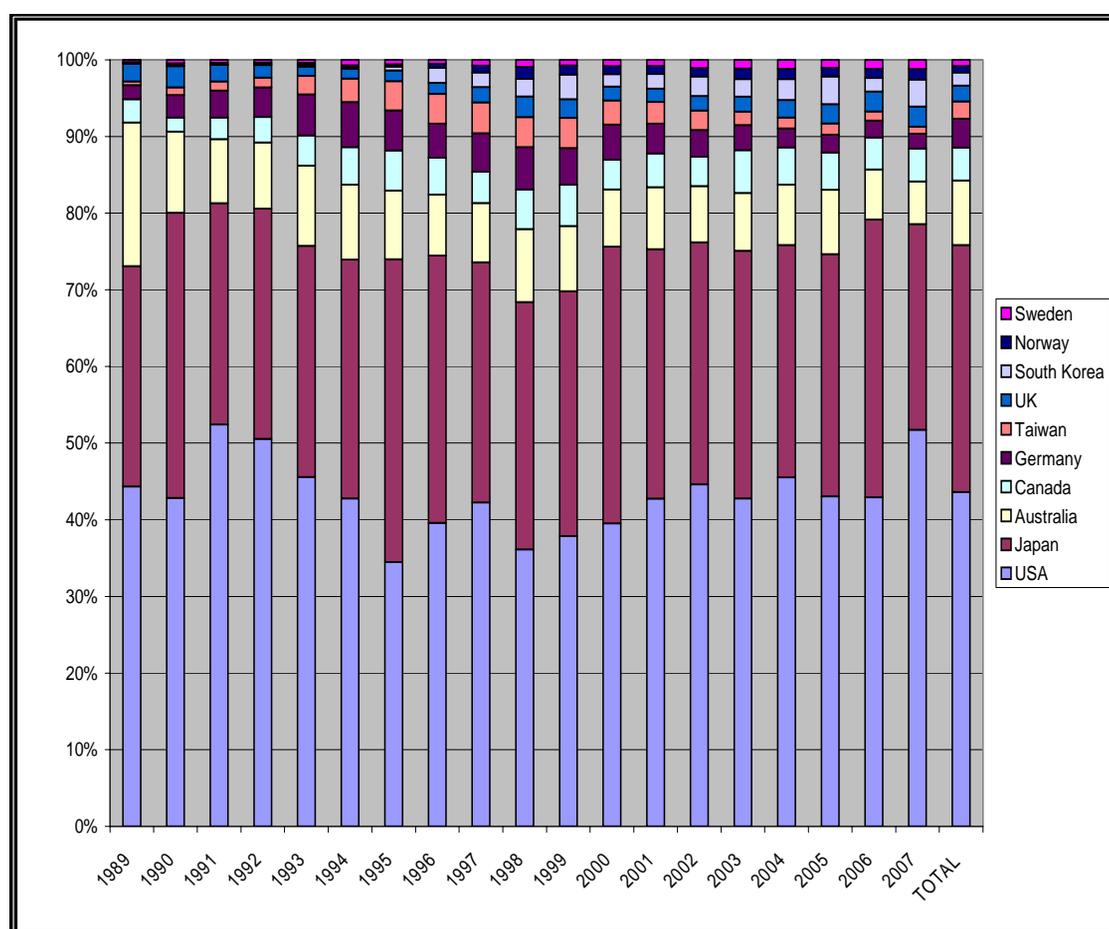


Figure 1. Number of Spouses and Partners of Foreign Nationals by Major Destination Countries: 1989 - 2007

LINKAPIL update

CFO gets P6.1M for outreach program

The leaders of two Filipino organizations – one in the US and the other in Germany – traveled back home recently to share their members' blessings with their compatriots.

In separate ceremonies, Secretary Dante A. Ang of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas received from Ms. Tess Alarcon, Executive Director of Feed the Hungry, and from Ms. Cecilia C. Wollenweber, President of the Deutsch-Philippinischer Kulturkreis e.V., checks amounting to P 6 million and P122,600.00 respectively. According to Sec. Dante Ang, the donation would be channeled to the outreach activities through the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL), CFO's outreach program. Ms. Alarcon said Feed the Hungry collected the money from among its members and benefactors for LINKAPIL's educational, small-infrastructure, health and medical, and livelihood programs.

On the other hand, Ms. Wollenweber explained that her group has already identified several LINKAPIL projects that it would finance, among

which are the construction of a communal faucet system in Lower Zone Ube, Paknaan, Mandaue City; support for 55 elderly under the ANAWIM Lay Mission Foundation, and scholarship grants for vocational trainees at the Don Bosco Youth Center. The water system will benefit 140 households. During both ceremonies, Sec. Ang noted that the stream of donations only proved the continuing trust of Filipino overseas organizations in the CFO's leadership and commitment to help overseas Filipinos reach out to communities in need.



Secretary Ang (center) receives the FTH's donation amounting to P 6 million from the Feed the Hungry, Inc. represented by its Executive Director Ms. Tess Alarcon (3rd from right). Present during the turn-over ceremony are FTH officers (left to right) Engr. Pepito Solis, Ms. Percy Solis, Ms. Lottie Buhain, Mr. Pablito Alarcon and Dir. Minda Valencia of the CFO.

Relief operation in Roxas City

In the aftermath of the damages caused by *Typhoon Frank* that affected most of the provinces in the Philippines, the Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH) has allocated P120,000 through the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL) or *Link for Philippine Development Program* of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). The fund was used for the purchase of relief items for distribution to victims of the calamity.

Based on the report from the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the CFO and FtH coursed through the latter's donation to Roxas City, one of the worst affected areas by the typhoon.

The relief operation was supervised by the CFO team, headed by Ms. Kim Dizon with two (2) CFO personnel, Mr. Rey Cordenillo - the City Administrator of Roxas, and Ms. Cynthia Besania of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Prior to the distribution of goods, the City Administration of Roxas and the DSWD identified the beneficiaries and prepared and packed the relief items. The beneficiaries received canned goods, instant noodles, rice, coffee, powdered milk, and sugar.

The FtH donation benefited a total of 500 families, 182 families of which were from Barangay Dingina and 318 families were from Barangay Banica in Roxas City.



Executive Director Jennifer O. Gonzales of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas accompanied by local barangay official inspects the repaired classrooms of the Bongoran Yellow Prepi School in Oas, Albay. The school is one of the recipients of the CFO's LINKAPIL program. More about LINKAPIL and the Bicol schools project in the next issue of FILTIES.

After typhoon Frank, blessings poured from overseas kababayans



Preparing of overseas donations for distribution.

On 21 June 2008, typhoon Frank hit Romblon and left about 70% of the province's property damaged. On the same day, the *M/V Princess of the Stars* sank in the waters off Romblon and left painful memories and images to families who lost their loved ones. On one hand, these tragic events separated families, friends and loved ones. On

the other hand, the same events brought people together to work toward helping their *kababayans*.

The Hawaii International Relief Organization (HIRO) in partnership with the Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH), both US-based Filipino associations overseas, donated about P135,000 for the victims of typhoon Frank. Said donation was coursed through the relief and calamity component of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas' *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* program.

Of the 12 *barangays* identified by the Office of the Governor of Romblon as those stricken badly by the typhoon, HIRO and FtH chose the coastal *barangays* of Sablayan and Agnaga in the Municipality of Romblon as the venue of the relief and calamity operations from 19 to 20 July 2008. The disaster relief benefited about 530 families and were organized in coordination with Mr. Andres Fondevilla of the Office of the Provincial Administrator, Mr. Carl Abella of the FtH, and Mr. Daryll Javier of the CFO facilitated the turnover.

The residents of Brgys. Sablayan and Agnaga not only received food assistance to help them get through the difficult days but more importantly, they were grateful for the concern of their *kababayans* who took the time to aid them in times of need.

mailbox

Longing for home

I'm very happy here in Wisconsin. Last June 25 we had the Akbayan party and I met lots of Filipinos. What I don't like here is the season, maybe because this is my first time to experience winter, 15 degrees below. I feel so cold and always long to return to the Philippines. But aside from that, everything is fine. My 6-year-old son is doing very good in school, and he's crazy with the snow. I'm hoping this year, I could find a job. Three to five years from now, we will go back to the Philippines for good.

Marilyn Sabucido
Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin

Homecoming

I was sponsored by my fiancé/petitioner to go to the United Kingdom. But before I could adjust my status as a permanent resident, my fiancé died. Since I was not able to contract marriage with him, I was only allowed to stay in the UK until the date of expiry as indicated in my entry stamp. I was left in a situation where I had problems acquiring a return ticket to Manila.

With the kindness of your organization, I was able to contact the IOM-UK and Big Market Refugee Asylum in Newcastle. They assisted me in preparing and arranging my papers for my return. And on March 11, I finally arrived in the Philippines.

Thank you and more power to your office.

Maria Rosales
Address withheld upon request



FILIPINO TIES

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Thank you

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas sent a letter to us informing that OWWA is ready to pay insurance benefits to the family of the late Roberto Panganiban. Roberto must be happy to see that his call for help bear some fruits for his family.

The CFO is not in-charge of looking after the welfare and needs of OFWs or temporary migrants. The government agency tasked in-charged with that task is OWWA.

We should thank CFO Chair Dante Ang, and his Executive Director Ms. Jennifer Gonzales for doing what they can to help Roberto. Let us pray that their kindness in the government increases.

Francis Oca
OFW Congress Middle East

Special commendation

My wife and I wish to express our thanks and commendation to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas for its effective and efficient management and courteous service to Filipinos going abroad.

Eusebio and Elizabeth San Diego
North Hollywood, California, USA

From down under

It is an advantage if you can communicate well here in Australia. Di mahirap mag-adjust. I feel I am blessed with a great partner and family, too. Their family is close knit so we get to see each other more often. My fiancé bought me a tryke to be able to go around the different places. Generally, Australians are very welcoming and supportive people. So wherever you are, be mindful of their ways and culture and try to get along with everyone by being open minded and continue learning!

Ms. Maric Ceryll D. Roa of New South Wales,
Australia

Great and loving it

I would like to let you know that I am able to apply for work here in Austin. I was able to get in at Dell Inc. I am learning a lot about how Americans are and their culture. Also learning a lot about other foreigners like Indians, Mexicans and Chinese. It is a melting pot out here. After being here for more than a year, there are times I miss home. I was able to find a Filipino restaurant here but nothing beats my mom's cooking.

So far, it is great and I am loving it.

Holly Kempf
Austin, Texas

CFO Supports UP College of Nursing in the 1st Asia Pacific Conference on Nursing Research



CFO Executive Director Jennifer O. Gonzales turns over a cheque worth P150,000.00 to Dean Josefina Tuazon of UP College of Nursing in support of the 1st Asia Pacific Conference on Nursing Research. Also in the photo are (L-R) Atty. Golda Myra Roma, Dr. Teresita Barcelo and Mr. Rino Paez.

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas partners with the University of the Philippines College of Nursing Foundation (UPCNF) in the conduct of the first Asia Pacific Conference on Nursing Research held on September 4-5, 2008 in Manila Hotel.

CFO's participation and support to the conference is in line with its objectives of promoting the competitiveness of Filipino nurses as part of its mandate under Executive Order No. 550, creating the Presidential Task Force on NCLEX.

The First Asia Pacific Conference on Nursing Research is intended to be a venue to formalize networks and linkages among nurse researchers and research-based nursing institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to develop and document evidence-based practice; to provide a collegial exchange of new ideas and information in a forum where evidence-based practices can be disseminated and discussed; to encourage the pursuit of evidence-based practices; and to strengthen the capacity for nursing research through regional and global linkages and network.

Over the past several decades, the Philippines has established itself as the largest source country of nurses worldwide. About 250,000 Filipino nurses are employed in health care systems in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and other countries facing acute staff shortages.

CFO program special

CFO kicks off 2008 with info drive on human trafficking and international migration

Taking off from the success of its 2007 Community Education Program (CEP), CFO started the year by undertaking an information drive on international migration, inter-marriage and human trafficking in the SOCKSARGEN and Davao regions from January 20-26. Composed of CFO officers - Ms. Cherry Joy Veniles, Mr. Troy Agcanas and Mr. Adolfo San Juan, the team was joined by regional representatives of the DFA, POEA and OWWA in visiting various local government units, parishes, media groups and non-government organizations based in Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur and General Santos City. The group also held symposia at the Mindanao State University, Notre Dame of Dadiangas, New Era University, Nabunturan National High School, and the University of Southeastern Philippines. More than 2,000 individuals participated and benefited from the 7-day campaign.

Immediately following the visit to Mindanao, succeeding teams proceeded to provinces in Central Luzon (Region III), CALABARZON (Region IV-A) and MIMARO (Region IV-B) to touch base with cities and municipalities where most migrants come from. Based on CFO's records, these areas include Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Laguna, Oriental Mindoro and Romblon.

The primary purpose of the campaign is to inform potential migrants and their families about the realities of international migration, cross-cultural marriage and the law on anti-human trafficking. The activities

WHAT IS THE CEP?

The Community Education Program (CEP) initiated by the Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO) is an annual inter-agency community education and information campaign that seeks to assist prospective migrants in making informed decisions regarding settlement abroad. Various migrant-serving national agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration lend their support by joining the week-long campaign held in various municipalities and provinces around the country.

The series of activities aims to generate community involvement in migration concerns and raise public awareness on various issues concerning migration, inter-marriage and existing government policies and programs directed against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud, and human trafficking, among others. The program reaches out to the public in municipalities, cities and provinces through the conduct of school symposia on migration, public assemblies, radio interviews, and interaction with community members.



conducted also provide the opportunity for would-be migrants and their families to learn about the social cost of migration, legal means of working or migrating to other countries, and for migrant-serving agencies like the CFO, DFA, POEA and OWWA, to update the public about their programs and services. During the CEP, participating local government units are encouraged to report cases of illegal recruitment and human trafficking in their areas and are reminded of the importance of having local ordinances that will suppress these crimes.

Towards the second-half of the year, CFO will continue to spearhead information campaigns in Camarines Sur and Sorsogon in the Bicol Region,

Capiz and Negros Occidental in Western Visayas, Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental in Northern Mindanao, Ifugao and Abra in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino in the Cagayan Valley Region, Marinduque and Palawan in MIMARO, Quezon and Aurora provinces, Leyte and Western Samar in Eastern Visayas, and in Manila, Pasay, Mandaluyong, San Juan, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasig and Quezon City.

CFO believes that the continuing success of its Community Education Program can be attributed largely to the cooperation of the participating educational institutions, NGOs, government agencies and the local government units that willingly accommodate the groups in their respective localities.



anti-trafficking

CFO officers survey trafficking activities in Singapore

The CFO sent a team to Singapore from 30 March to 05 April 2008 to conduct a research study on the conditions of Filipinos, specifically those who are deemed victims of human trafficking.

The team met with Philippine embassy officials to discuss the trends and schemes used in various cases of human trafficking, as well as the concerns of domestic helpers, who comprise a large number of Filipino workers in Singapore. An interview of some of the residents housed at the Filipino Workers Resource Center was arranged by the Embassy which gave the team a clear perspective of migration realities encountered by OFWs.

The team likewise met with officers and representatives of various Filipino associations and non-government / civic / religious organizations in Singapore like the Home Organization for Migration Economics and the Archdiocese Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, most of whom have vowed to help in providing assistance to Filipino migrant workers encountering difficulties in Singapore. They also had the opportunity to interview OFWs and their families, on-the-job trainees and tourists, and the trafficking victims as well. Their participation and cooperation proved to be very valuable and enlightening for the team to come up with recommendations to prevent human trafficking.

Among the issues and concerns that were raised during the meetings and interviews were the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation / forge agreements on procedures between the two countries aimed at eliminating trafficking and providing assistance to the victims; improve coordination with inter-agency members, particularly in the areas of prosecution,

rehabilitation, reintegration, and witness protection for the trafficking victims; the proliferation of agencies offering fraudulent jobs and use of fraudulent return electronic plane tickets; the connivance of immigration officers with local travel agencies and recruiters; cases of maltreatment, sexual harassment and molestation, and physical abuse and mental torture.

The study visit provided an avenue for CFO to establish networks with the Embassy as well as with various Filipino associations and non-government organizations in Singapore for possible partnership in carrying out some of its programs and services like referrals of assistance-to-nationals and trafficking cases, development assistance to the Philippines through the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* Program; and post-arrival services for newly arrived migrants.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Manila International Airport Authority, National Bureau of Investigation, Office of the Prosecutor of the Department of Justice, Philippine National Police, Philippine Overseas Employment

See CFO officers, page 11



CFO Officer Ms. Ruth Tuano(right) with Ms. Bridget Lew (2nd from right), President of HOME, with other volunteers

CFO probes human trafficking in Malaysia

Malaysia, a country with a rich and unique culture, has become a major destination not only for tourists around the world, but also for Filipinos who have become victims of human trafficking. To further address this issue, Messrs. Warner A. Dawal and Mario T. Francisco of the CFO went on a research study-trip in Malaysia on 6-14 March 2008. The team visited the cities of Kota Kinabalu, Labuan, and Sandakan, areas in Malaysia where there are rising incidences of human trafficking against Filipinos. The study aims to determine trafficking schemes, routes, and other problems that Filipino victims encounter in the area, and review the effectiveness of Philippine government's initiative in addressing the problem.

The trip was highlighted by a courtesy call of the CFO team with Ambassador Victoriano M. Lecaros and other embassy officials. During the courtesy call, Ambassador Lecaros discussed the Embassy's programs and services in providing assistance to Filipino victims of human trafficking in Malaysia. Attaché Nestor Ramos also briefed the team about the cases of human trafficking the Post has handled and is currently attending to. Other embassy officials present during the discussion were Labor Attaché

Josephus B. Jimenez, Vice Consuls Shirlene C. Mananquil and Marford Angeles, and Attaché Gangco Panguinaguina.



Mr. Warner Dawal of the CFO briefs Filipino migrant workers in Malaysia on the Philippine government's initiative to address human trafficking

proper knowledge on precautions and prevention techniques in order to avoid future incidents of human trafficking.

After visiting Kuala Lumpur, the team proceeded to Sabah to meet with Filipino organizations and church groups in the area. They were assisted by Filipino labor volunteers, Ms. Marilou Chin and Mr. Jesus Perlas in Kota Kinabalu and in Labuan; and Mr. Edraldy Tan in Sandakan.

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anti-trafficking

CFO spearheads advocacy training for youth on anti-trafficking in Davao City



The Task Force Against Human Trafficking of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas spearheaded the *Advocacy Training for Youth on Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation* in Davao City on 28-29 March 2008. The CFO-TFHT has partnered with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Integrated Gender Development Division (IGDD) of the Davao City Government in organizing the training.

The advocacy training for youth is envisioned to create awareness among Filipino youth about issues and concerns on trafficking in persons, foster youth participation in suppressing trafficking activities, and organize anti-trafficking advocates within the Mindanao region.

Some 59 members of youth organizations from 10 provinces and 7 cities in the Mindanao region, which include Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Misamis Oriental, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Surigao del Norte, and Zamboanga del Norte, attended the training. The participating youth organizations are Adolescent Health Advocate; Brgy. Ubalde 1 Children Association; Catholic Youth Organization; Camino Nuevo Youth Organization; Davao Archdiocesan Youth Coordinating Apostolate; Davao Teen Center; Student Council of the University of Southeastern Philippines; Institute for Community Service and Development of Cor Jesu College; Kaliman Clan and Professionals Association; Kaugmahan Pagpagahum Foundation, Inc., *Lawig Bubai*; MCIC Parish Youth Ministry; Nakamata; National Youth Commission; Obrero Campus Student Council; Pag-asa Youth Association; Pag-ugmad sa Kabataan; Rotaract Club of Bislig; San Nicolas Youth Choir; San Nicolas Pastoral Youth Ministry; Sangguniang Kabataan; Surigao Youth Center; UCCP Pag-ugmad; and Watershed Management Youth Council.

The first day of training focused on the overview of the nature, condition and relevant laws and regulations on trafficking, particularly those related to women and children. Practicing lawyers from Davao City, Atty. Romeo Cabarde and Atty. January Faye Risonar discussed the *Overview of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and *RA 9208 & Constitutional Provisions Related to Children/Youth*, respectively. Davao City Prosecutor Trinidad Dela Torre-Cardona discussed the various rules, mechanics and techniques in examining a child victim or witness. The day concluded with a workshop facilitated by Mr. Adolfo San Juan from CFO-Management Information System Division on *Information Gathering, Standard Reporting Format and Philippine Information*

System on Trafficking (PHILIST), a database system developed by CFO in cooperation with the National Police Commission and the Solidarity Center to record trafficking and other related cases, profiles of victims and traffickers, as well as the various circumstances leading to the commission of the crime.

The second day was a discussion on the programs and services on anti-human trafficking by Ms. Lorna B. Mandin from IGDD, and Director Merilo Q. Limbaro from DILG-Davao City. Atty. Golda Myra R. Roma of the CFO facilitated the planning workshop on youth activities in relation to anti-trafficking. The participants were asked to prepare a year-long action plan in which they are expected to implement in their respective communities. The presentation of the CARAGA group was recognized as the best workshop output, considering their focus on conducting training for parents, social workers, police officers, public and private lawyers regarding proper management and handling of trafficking victims; establishment of youth centers; and financial assistance for viable livelihood programs for youth and women.

The said training was the second phase of CFO-TFHT advocacy workshop and a follow-up to the first phase conducted in Cebu City in November 2007. The next advocacy training covering Luzon region is tentatively scheduled in August 2008 in Baguio City.

The advocacy training for youth is envisioned to create awareness among Filipino youth about issues and concerns on trafficking in persons, foster youth participation in suppressing trafficking activities, and organize anti-trafficking advocates within the Mindanao region.

PDOS REMINDER

Filipino emigrants attending the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) and Peer Counseling at the Commission on Filipinos Overseas may make a reservation by telephone or through the Internet at least five working days before the scheduled date. The new procedure has been in force since July 1, 2007.

For telephone reservations, emigrants may call (02) 563-1965 or (02) 561-8321 local 103, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For on-line reservation, emigrants may access the CFO website, www.cfo.gov.ph and submit a completed reservation application. For inquiries, call 562-3848 or 561-8321 locals 104, 105, 201 to 203.

Philippine schools...

continued from page 1

Aside from the lectures delivered by DepEd speakers, participants were updated about the various programs and services of the Philippine Government. The conference also gave the participants an opportunity to interact with visiting colleagues from the home country. Additionally, the conference served as a venue for participants to confer with representatives of textbook publishing companies. Among the colleges / universities that sent representatives were Emilio Aguinaldo College, De La Salle College of St. Benilde and St. Jude College. Said institutions were given a chance to present their school programs before the graduating students of Philippine schools overseas.

CFO Executive Director Jennifer O. Gonzales explained the Commission's functions as part of the Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas while Director Carmelina Velasquez of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration made a presentation of her agency's role in the IACPSO.

CFO Chairman Dante A. Ang delivered the keynote address, hailing the contributions made by parents, students and other stakeholders of the overseas schools. He noted that although most participants do not pay taxes to the Philippine Government, he recognized the contributions of

overseas workers in keeping the economy afloat through their remittances. He also lauded them for their continuing efforts to instill responsible citizenship among their students.

After the conference, Dr. Mohammed Al Neyadi of the United International Private School (UIPS) hosted a dinner for the participants. UIPS faculty and students performed Filipino dances and songs to welcome everyone to the affair. As it was in the past, the conference enabled participants to exchange views with one another. Participants said that the insights they gained should help them perform their tasks better as administrators, principals and teachers. Some added that they would serve as a guide in making plans for the future, especially in the formulation and implementation of the curriculum.

Executive Director Gonzales announced the conclusion of the conference. She thanked the organizers, speakers and the participants for making the activity a success. She commended the participants for their personal dedication in fulfilling every parent's dream of their children getting the best possible education. She hoped that by the next conference there would be more success stories to share for everyone to learn from.

Lingkod sa Kapwa...

continued from page 1

For the first semester of 2008, the CFO facilitated the following activities under the LINKAPIL program:

- Establishment of scholarship grants which benefited vocational students from the Don Bosco Youth Center in Tondo, Manila
- Implementation of seven (7) feeding programs in three (3) provinces
- Conduct of 13 medical missions which benefited more than 40,000 Filipinos in 13 provinces
- Distribution of P34.9 million worth of medical equipment and supplies to 14 provinces

About P1.6 million went to infrastructure projects such as classroom and water system construction. Relief assistance and gift giving activities, turn-over of educational materials and various skills transfer/trainings were also held in various parts of the country.

Filipinos warned...

continued from page 4

While matchmaking agencies are considered legal in South Korea, Korean law requires these agencies to be registered and to be aware of issues concerning interracial marriages and ethics. Amb. Cruz notes that many Filipinos enter South Korea through marriages arranged through these matchmakers. Many are lured by promises of work or a better life.

As of January 31, 2008, approximately 5,000 Filipinos married to South Koreans reside in the peninsula, some of whom met through matchmaking agencies.

CFO probes human...

continued from page 8

Among the issues and concerns that were raised during the meetings were problems on irregular migration, the absence of a Philippine honorary consulate in the state of Sabah, inadequate information on the part of OFWs about human trafficking issues, uncooperative trafficking victims who want to be rescued, and the perennial problem of "backdoor exits" from Zamboanga.

The team was informed that some immigration officials in the Philippines have been tolerating irregular forms of migration stemming from lenient travel measures for Malaysia-bound OFWs. Consequently, Filipinos who falsified their travel documents and illegally entered Malaysia are also vulnerable to exploitation, harassment and human trafficking.

Filipinos in Sabah also informed the team that there is a need to establish an honorary consulate in their area. At present, the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur solely handles consular concerns of all Filipinos in Malaysia. The establishment of an honorary consulate in Sabah is seen as a way to efficiently implement the DFA's assistance-to-nationals program.

The trip also enabled CFO to establish networks with Filipino organizations and labor volunteers in Malaysia for possible partnership in carrying out some of its programs. It also set-up easy referral system for human trafficking cases which aims to expedite assistance of the Philippine government to victims of human trafficking in Malaysia.

It is expected that the study's findings will help address the current problems arising from extensive cases of trafficking of Filipino women in Malaysia. Information gathered from the study will also be used to establish reintegration programs of the Philippine government for trafficking victims upon their return to the country.

Teatro Akebono...

continued from page 3

When they were transported into the magical world of JFCs, the two learned to accept who they are and eventually helped others in similar situation.

Seven JFCs successfully passed the workshops and were cast to present the play in different venues in Tokyo, Saitama, Niigata, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka. Apart from showcasing their talents, the group also met with Japanese school children and government officials.

CFO hopes that agencies like the NCCA will continue to support similar worthy undertakings in the future that will promote the interest and well-being of migrant women and their children.

Legislative updates

Congressional Initiatives for Overseas Filipinos

Several bills related to overseas Filipinos are currently filed in the Fourteenth Congress. These bills range from amendments to existing laws to creation of specialized facilities and services to overseas Filipinos. Among these are:

A. Amendments to RA 8042 (Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995)

Several bills were filed to amend Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. The amendments call for improvement of protection of migrant workers, redefinition of functions of the Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and the establishment of a Legal Attache Office in the Middle East. A bill was also filed which seeks to impose penalties to government officials who fail to render service and assistance to migrant workers. Most of these bills are in the first reading and/or referred to its specific committees.

B. Creation of Specialized Facilities and Agencies for Overseas Filipinos

A bill was filed which provides for the establishment of the Philippine Overseas Workers Bank which shall grant loans and financial assistance to overseas Filipinos. The proposed bank shall give preference and priority for agricultural and small-medium scale loans of OFWs and their beneficiaries. A separate bill was also introduced to create the Department of Overseas Filipino Workers which carry the main thrust of enforcing legislations concerning OFWs' rights and welfare. The bill also calls for the abolition of the POEA and the OWWA. Majority of these bills are in the first reading.

C. Cultural, Educational and Heritage Programs for Overseas Filipinos

To promote Filipino heritage and culture among overseas Filipinos, a bill was filed which mandates the state through its relevant agencies, to provide for the establishment of Philippine schools and Filipiniana resource centers in different communities abroad. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas shall partly finance the program. These bills are in the first reading.

D. Incentive Package and Benefits for Overseas Filipinos

A bill called the Overseas Filipino Investment Bill urges the government and private institutions to provide savings facility in generating and pooling

of funds for overseas Filipino investors and provide risk-free investment opportunities with preferential rates. Exemptions on income tax and duty on imported capital equipment will also be given.

Another bill provides for the framework for the transfer of technology by overseas Filipinos. The bill calls for methodologies by which overseas Filipinos may effectively assist in the modernization of science and technology.

Meanwhile, a separate bill calls for the creation of the OFW Pension fund which urges every overseas Filipino registered with POEA and CFO to remit 5% of their gross monthly income for 5 years. The bill also provides for different benefits and incentives to OFWs participating in the program.

These bills are in the first reading.

E. Amendments to RA 9189 (Overseas Absentee Voting Act)

The House of Representatives approved on third and final reading House Bill 3793 which incorporates all other amendments filed in the Lower House regarding the Overseas Absentee Voting Act. Salient features of the amendments include (1) immigrants upon registration shall declare that he/she shall resume actual residence in the Philippines not later than 7 years, (2) setting up of field, mobile and pre-departure registrations, and (3) introduction of three modes of voting – personal, by mail and other means as may be allowed. The CFO, if accredited by COMELEC, may be utilized for purposes of supporting the overseas absentee voting and registration processes.

F. Seafarers' Affairs and Welfare

A bill was filed in the House of Representatives which sets a comprehensive measure for the protection of Filipino seafarers. The magna carta provides for the seafarers' rights, streamlining of procedures involved in employment, mandatory requirements for overseas recruitment, conditions for employment and the establishment of a reintegration center. The bill is in first reading.

G. Stock Estimation

A bill was filed in the Senate mandating the National Statistics Office to take a special census of all Filipinos residing abroad. The bill is in first reading.

CFO officers survey... *continued from page 8*

Administration, Bureau of Immigration, and other relevant agencies are directed to support the anti-human trafficking campaign per E.O. 548-A. The CFO Chairman as head of the Task Force, may also call upon the heads of other government agencies for assistance, as may be necessary from time to time. Since the creation of the Task Force, CFO has assisted in the repatriation of nine trafficked victims and is currently handling 63 trafficking and other related cases, involving 137 victims or complainants. The CFO has also spearheaded a comprehensive information campaign against trafficking in persons through the publication of posters and handbooks, and through the conduct of community education program in various provinces in the country, especially those with high incidences of emigration.



H.E. David Njoka, Ambassador of Kenya to the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (center) paid a courtesy call on CFO's Executive Director Jennifer O. Gonzales. Also in the photo are Ms. Noel Kituto, First Counselor of the Kenya High Commission and Ms. Janette Cuarto, staff of the Consulate of Kenya in Manila.

International migration is a shared responsibility - Ang

Secretary Dante A. Ang delivered a speech on the Philippine experience in managing migration before high-level officials, academicians and migration specialists from different countries, during a two-day conference at Columbia University in New York City on 11-12 April 2008.

The conference on migration was spearheaded by Nobel Prize for Economics awardee, Joseph Stiglitz and the Task Force on International Migration of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD). IPD was founded by Stiglitz in July 2000 to help developing countries explore policy alternatives, and enable wider civic participation in economic policymaking. It is now a global network of more than 200 leading economists, political scientists, and practitioners from the North and South with diverse backgrounds and views. The conference aims to study the costs and benefits of migration through three different but complementary migration flows: documented permanent; documented temporary; and irregular migration.

Secretary Ang was invited by Stiglitz along with other participants from the US, Mexico, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Egypt, South Korea and Bangladesh to share their respective experiences and views on migration. Philippine Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan was also invited to react to one of the speaker's presentation on how best to protect migrant workers. The next task force meeting will continue to discuss managing international migration, and may be held in the fall of 2008 at the Universidad de Guadalajara in Mexico.

Secretary Ang discussed the experience of the Philippines in managing various migration flows, the policy environment which led to the development of formal government institutions, benefits of international migration, and how government institutions respond to its negative consequences. He stressed that improving governance in migration is a shared responsibility by both sending and receiving countries. In conclusion, he recommended ways to engage receiving countries in ensuring migrant welfare, improving access to legal migration, and assisting sending countries in mitigating the consequences of brain drain.

Other topics discussed during the conference also include linkages between regular and undocumented migration, migration flow management, ways to minimize the costs of migration both in the host and home countries, protection of migrant workers, economic development through migration,

and governance of migration.

After the conference, Secretary Ang met with the Filipino nurses recruited by Sentosa Recruitment Agency and their counsel, representatives from the Philippine Forum, and Consul General Cecilia Rebong in New York City. During the meeting, the nurses asked for support from the Philippine government in their legal case against Sentosa. They conveyed that a favorable resolution from the Philippine Department of Labor Employment (DOLE) on their appeal to reissue the preventive suspension order against SRA could significantly strengthen their efforts to secure better and fair treatment of Filipino health workers in the United States. Secretary Ang relayed to the nurses that he will follow up with the DOLE the status of nurses' appeal. The Sentosa nurses who were recruited by SRA, came to the US in 2004 and 2005 for employment in various medical facilities. They eventually resigned from their posts *en masse*, alleging serious complaints and labor law violations against their employer.



**“improving
governance in
migration is a
shared
responsibility by
both sending and
receiving countries”**

After his official visit to New York, Secretary Ang flew to Halifax, Nova Scotia to attend a series of meetings and symposia on migration from 14-17 April, sponsored by the Atlantic Overseas Recruiting (AOR), an international recruitment agency. Secretary Ang met with the labor ministers of Prince Edward Island, government officials, various business groups in hospitality, tourism, and financial industries of Nova Scotia, and members of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. He informed them that the Philippines has adequate supply of skilled labor that could help Atlantic Canada address their labor shortage. He also proposed that the province of Nova Scotia enter into a bilateral labor agreement with the Philippines, akin to what the western Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Manitoba did in December 2006, January 2008, and February 2008, respectively.

Secretary Ang also conducted a symposium about the Philippine migration experience, which was attended by the faculty and students of the Dalhousie University, one of Canada's leading universities. He also met with the Filipino community in Nova Scotia. Composed mostly of skilled and professional workers, the community expressed their gratitude that a Philippine government official devoted time to consult and interact with them. As of April 2008, there are about 500 families from the Philippines residing in Nova Scotia.

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Thank you.