

SUGGO

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS - NEW YORK
VOLUME IV NO. 1 JUNE-DECEMBER 2008

Building Bridges at the United Nations



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo speaks before delegates to the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Jerry Casal

Sharing the Philippine Experience

“It has not been easy, but Filipinos are tough and resilient. We have pulled together.”

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO TOLD THE WORLD THAT THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE, long-term reforms and international cooperation, the Philippines is now in a better position to face the present global challenges of rising fuel and food prices, and the volatile global economic situation.

In her speech at the opening of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly on 23 September, the President admitted though that it was not easy as Filipinos, like other peoples in the rest of the world, also feel the pain of high food and fuel prices.

“It hasn’t been easy but Filipinos are tough and resilient. We have pulled together. We have been able to draw on additional revenues to provide targeted investments in food and fuel to keep our poor afloat until a better day,” the President said.

The President said a new paradigm of self-reliance – through the use of a targeted strategy with a set of precise prescriptions to ease price challenges; food sufficiency and more energy independence, as well as long-term reforms implemented—has somehow lessened the impact on the poor of these global challenges.

She, however, said the Philippines also needs international cooperation, including that of the UN, “as never before.”

“To address these global challenges, we must go on building bridges among allies around the globe, to bring rice to where it is needed to feed the people; investments to create jobs, and keep the peace and stability in the world,” she said.

The President said since the rise in the global prices of fuel and oil months ago, the Philippines has increased and stabilized the supply of rice and delivered targeted subsidies to the poor as funds are now available from increased revenue collections resulting from the tough economic reforms she had initiated.

She added that to ensure a stable supply and affordable prices of rice, the Philippines has reached out to neighbors like Vietnam and others in

ASEAN.

At the same time, the President said the Philippine government has invested more billions (of pesos) in planting and agricultural modernization to increase food production; and cracked down on price gouging.

She added that her thrust of developing indigenous and renewable sources of energy has lessened the country’s dependence on imported fossil fuel.

“We have increased our energy independence by 17 percent through greater use of geothermal, biofuel and other renewable sources. We expect to attain 60 percent independence in two years,” she stressed.

The President also said Mindanao – which is one of the country’s food baskets, Luzon being the other—has the majority of our poorest provinces it is a sad irony that our food basket has some of the highest hunger (rates) in our nation (and) the prime reason is the endless Mindanao conflict.

Just as the peace talks have achieved remarkable progress, the President said rogue elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) “decided to take the law into their own hands.”

Thus, the President added, the government’s decision to shift the basic paradigm of the peace negotiations—from talking with armed groups to dialoguing with concerned communities and major stakeholders.

“There is no alternative to peace. I stand before you today to declare loud and clear that we are committed to the peace process in Mindanao,” the President said, adding that the context of engagement with all armed groups shall subscribe to the UN-recognized principle of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration.”

She also informed the UN body that the Philippines will host next month the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development and, in May next year, the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue for Cooperation and Development.

The President was the fourth speaker this morning at the UN General Assembly where over a hundred national leaders participated.

SEÑOR DON MIGUEL D' ESCOTO BROCKMANN, His Excellency, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, friends.

The developing world is at a tipping point. In the Philippines, we feel the pain of high prices of food, fuel and rice. Our people pursue the universal dream of a better life for themselves and their children: better education, better healthcare, higher wages, a dignified retirement. We are proving the value of a new paradigm for self-reliance through the use of: first, a targeted strategy with a precise set of prescriptions to ease our price challenges; second, food self-sufficiency and more energy independence; and third, long-term reforms. This is a positive example we wish to share with the rest of the world.

Our gains in the last seven years were hard-earned. We made tough and sometimes painful decisions to reset our economy - tax increases, banking reforms, crackdown on smugglers, and tough fiscal discipline, to name a few. Thankfully, these reforms have given us some running room to weather the first wave of global price shocks that reverberated across the world earlier this year.

It hasn't been easy but Filipinos are tough and resilient. We have pulled together. We have been able to draw on additional revenues to provide targeted investments in food and fuel to keep our poor afloat until a better day.

But we are also realistic that we cannot do it alone. We need a strong UN as never before. We need rigorous international cooperation as never before.

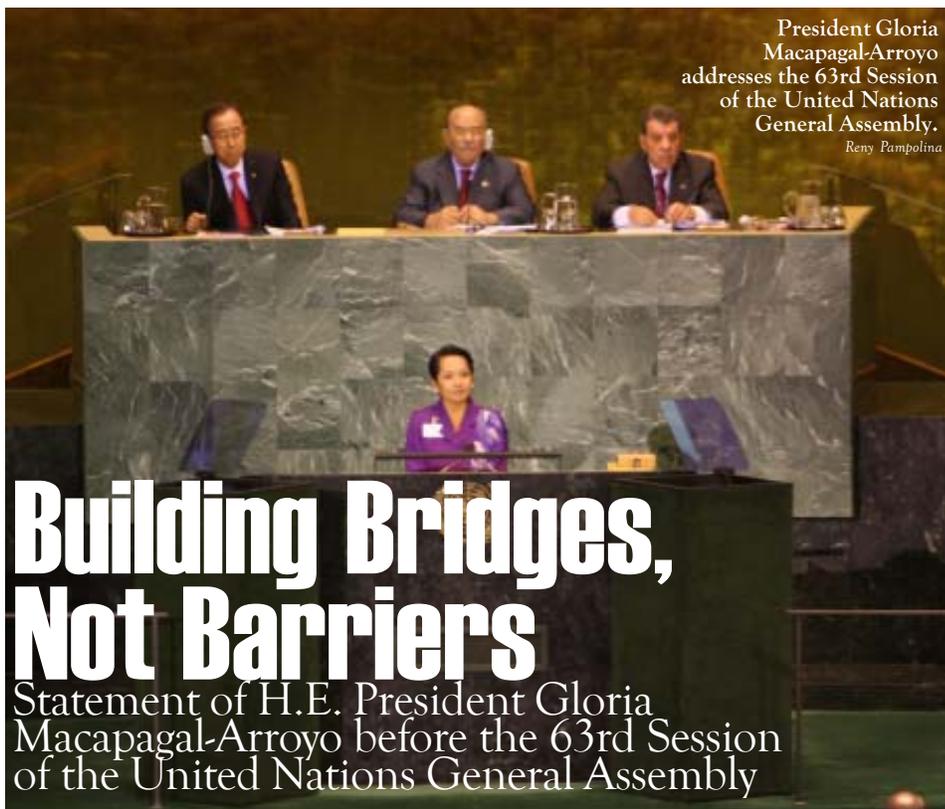
Economic uncertainty has moved like a tsunami around the globe, wiping away gains, erasing progress, not just here in Manhattan Island, but also in the many islands of the Philippines. Just when we thought the worst had passed, the light at the end of the tunnel became an oncoming train hurtling forward with new shocks to the global financial system. The setbacks from these global shocks of the past year, and the past weeks, are real and profound. It will take time and perseverance to put the pieces back together.

To address these global challenges, we must go on building bridges among allies around the globe, to bring rice to where it is needed to feed the people; investments to create jobs, and keep the peace and stability in the world.

It is therefore timely that our Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has organized this year's agenda around the impact of the global economy on the poor. He deserves our highest praise for his quick and decisive action on the global food crisis. His comprehensive framework for action involving the UN, donor countries, civil society and the private sector seeks to achieve food security through the right combination of policies, technologies and investments. This is a model of the United Nations in action.

Since the volatile global economies became apparent in its situation many months ago, in the Philippines, we have increased and stabilized the supply of rice and delivered targeted subsidies to the poor. We have reached out to neighbors like Vietnam and others in ASEAN and elsewhere to ensure a stable supply and affordable prices. We have clamped down on price gouging, and invested more billions in planting and agricultural modernization.

We have increased our energy independence by 17 percent through greater use of geothermal, bio-fuel and other renewable sources. We expect to attain 60 percent energy independence in two years.



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo addresses the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Reny Pampolina

Building Bridges, Not Barriers

Statement of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo before the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Biofuels have been cited for being a positive factor for clean energy. At the same time, they have also been cited as a negative factor that contributes to high food prices. We are pursuing a policy of using non-food biofuel sources planted on land unusable for food production purposes. We see this approach as a way for countries to seek a sustainable balance between food and energy needs.

For food self-sufficiency, our food baskets are North Luzon - in our largest island - and the southern island of Mindanao. Mindanao has fields of the highest productivity, yet also the majority of our poorest provinces. It is a sad irony that our food basket has some of the highest hunger in our nation. The prime reason is the endless Mindanao conflict.

Our archipelago of 7,000 islands has had its share of religious strife, ethnic tension and violence. For years, we have worked to achieve peace in Mindanao. Much progress was made, until violent elements within the Moro Islamic Liberation Front decided to take the law into their own hands. We will restart the dialogue when the area is secure, our people are safe, and responsible elements in the MILF regain control.

There is no alternative to peace. I stand before you today, to declare loud and clear that we are committed to the process of peace in Mindanao.

We gratefully acknowledge here today the central role of so many friends and allies, like the UN, Brunei, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and others in the Organization of the Islamic Conference; Australia, New Zealand, the US and other bilateral ODA partners; the UE and Sweden, all have played a big role in advancing peace and development in Mindanao.

We will refocus the peace talks for one that is centered on dialogues with rebels, for one of authentic dialogues with the communities. The

context of our engagement with all armed groups shall subscribe to the UN-recognized principle of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration.

We maintain high hopes in interfaith dialogue as a means to build bridges rather than barriers between communities of different cultures and ethnicity. In continuation of this effort, the Philippines will host the first-ever special Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue for Cooperation and Development in May next year.

We will also cooperate with the Alliance of Civilizations. We are also pleased that our Secretary General will join us in Manila during the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Our Overseas Filipino Workers are true global pioneers. There isn't a ship abroad that doesn't have a Filipino crew, or a nation without highly skilled Filipino workers. The movement of people for one country to another will surely increase as globalization continues to erase borders. This should be recognized as having implications on the growth and development of both sending and receiving countries.

Mr. President, in many troubled places of our world, the UN is the last great hope for peace and security. For this reason, the Philippines contributes one of the largest police contingents to UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. President, your leadership is more vital than ever. The Philippines will fully support you as you lead our General Assembly for the coming year.

In conclusion, Mr. President and friends, there are hundreds of millions of good people across this globe who are struggling as never before. We must hear their cry for help. It is within the collective power of the leaders at this UN Assembly to fulfill the universal dream of better education, better health, food on the table and a dignified life.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO called on all women leaders to fight for women empowerment as well as pursue justice, dignity and equality for women all over the world.

The President issued the call during the Women Leaders Forum hosted by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on 25 September.

The President noted that even in better times, women were already "double burdened" as women and housewives

And now, with the present global financial and economic crises, women have "triple burdens"—as single heads of households, lesser healthcare and soaring prices of fuel and food, especially for the poor women in the world.

"So as women leaders, we must be champions of women in this, especially to those who are in need. It is now, more than ever, that we need women's voices to be heard to fight for the rights and opportunities of women, both in our respective nations and in the whole world," the President said, as she batted strongly for the candidacy of Sen. Miriam Santiago for a seat in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"Add another great gain right here at the UN, if we continue to secure a seat for a woman in the ICJ," the President said, adding that the term of the woman presiding officer in the ICJ expires this year.

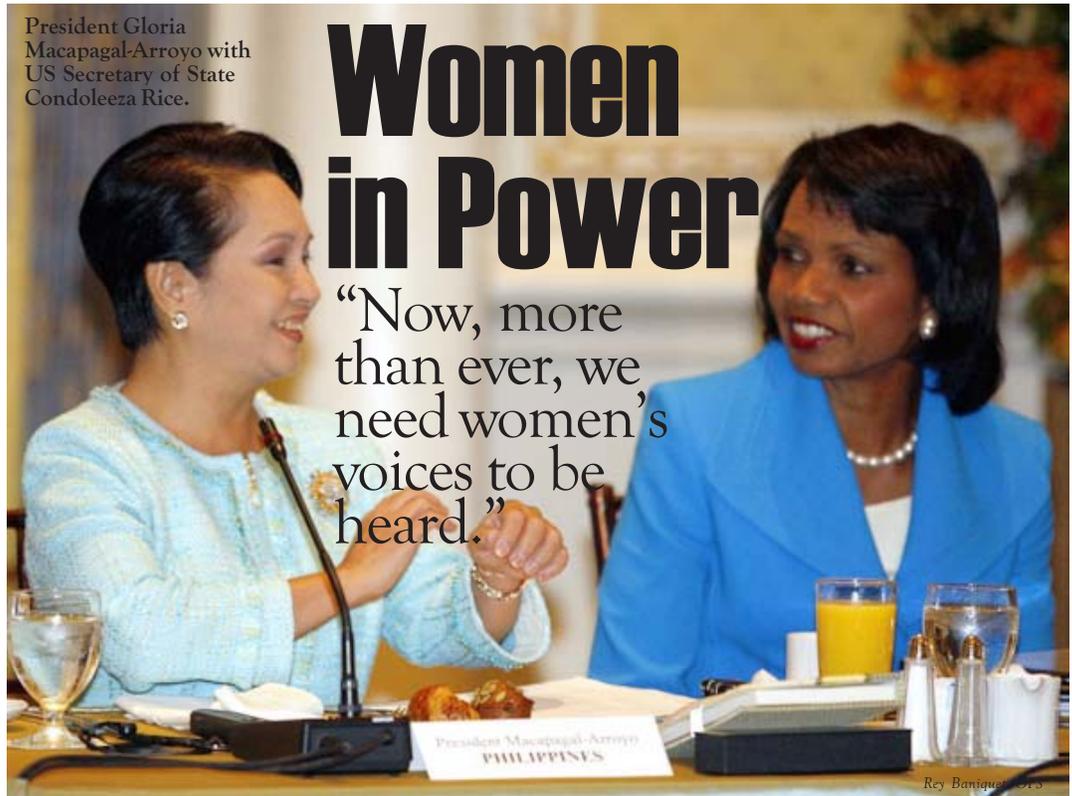
"If selected, we continue to have one. If not, then the women's voice will not be represented in that very important court and that would be a shame," she added.

At the same time, the President said women leaders must work to cushion the impact of a "sagging economy" on poor women by pursuing justice, dignity and equality.

The President stressed that the Philippines has made "important gains" as far as gender parity is concerned, but "more needs to be done."

She said one of the achievements of the Philippines under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is gender parity.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.



Women in Power

"Now, more than ever, we need women's voices to be heard."

The President said the Philippines has won recognition one among the top six countries in the world, and the top-rated in Asia, in terms of gender parity. The Philippines is No. 1 in terms of literacy rate and Filipino women have a slight edge in both simple and functional literacy over males.

The President was among four women heads of state who attended the forum which was created in 2006 by Rice to ensure that issues important to women — such as education, political and economic empowerment, and access to justice — are treated as international priorities.

The other women leaders at the forum were Chile President Michelle Bachelet, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Finland President Tarja Kaarina Holonen.

GMA: RP on Target for MDGs

"The Philippines has made solid gains in reducing poverty and hunger."



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo makes her intervention before the High-Level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals.

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO COMMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS THAT THE Philippines will meet the 2015 target date of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The President, who was the first head of state to deliver a statement during the high level meeting on 25 September at the UN, emphasized that the Philippines has made solid gains in reducing poverty and hunger.

"Our pro-poor agenda has been at the center of our poverty alleviation efforts. Early on, we incorporated our commitment under the MDG in our administration's Medium-Term Development Plan, thus we committed ourselves to allocate the resources needed in these areas," the President stressed. This, she said, is because the Philippine government complies with the "universal dream" of a better life for all the people. As a result, she said that at the rate extreme poverty and malnutrition are declining, the Philippines will be able to meet the 2015 MDG target.

The President said this target is achievable despite the present global economic slowdown and soaring prices of oil and food because of the economic reforms put in place that resulted in an improved economy.

She stressed that the Philippines will emerge from these global challenges due to the greater self-reliance strategy adopted by the government. This strategy includes the diversification of the export market, greater use of renewable and indigenous sources of energy, and ensuring steady supply of food, especially of rice, and measures to increase food production.

But the President stressed that the Philippines still needs the support of developed countries. "But I am not here to fool myself or anyone else. I am a realist and we cannot be alone. We need the help of developed countries more than ever. We call on donor nations to help developing nations meet their MDGs on time," she said.

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY CAPPED ITS two-day meeting on interfaith cooperation for peace on 13 November with the unanimous adoption of a Philippine-initiated resolution calling on member-states to take steps to further promote inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance and understanding.

In its report to Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo, the Philippine Mission to the United Nations said the resolution entitled "Promotion of Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace," tabled by the Philippines and Pakistan, was adopted by the General Assembly at the end of its plenary meeting with high level participation.

The resolution was personally introduced by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo at the opening on Wednesday of the plenary meeting on Agenda Item 45: A Culture of Peace, which was also participated in by world leaders led by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah of Jordan, United States President George Bush, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Israeli President Shimon Peres.

Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr., Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said that in addition to the Philippines and Pakistan, 76 other member-states, including China, Japan and Russia, co-sponsored the resolution, up from the 56 Member-States that co-sponsored the resolution last year and the 24 that co-sponsored the original resolution in 2004.

"Although it is the fifth resolution tabled by the Philippines and adopted by consensus by the General Assembly since 2004, the 2008 resolution is specially significant because it formally took note for the first time of the four major interfaith initiatives of the Philippines, outside the ambit of the United Nations," Ambassador Davide said.

These are the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace at the international level and the Asia-Europe Interfaith Dialogue Forum and the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue for Peace and Harmony at the regional level.

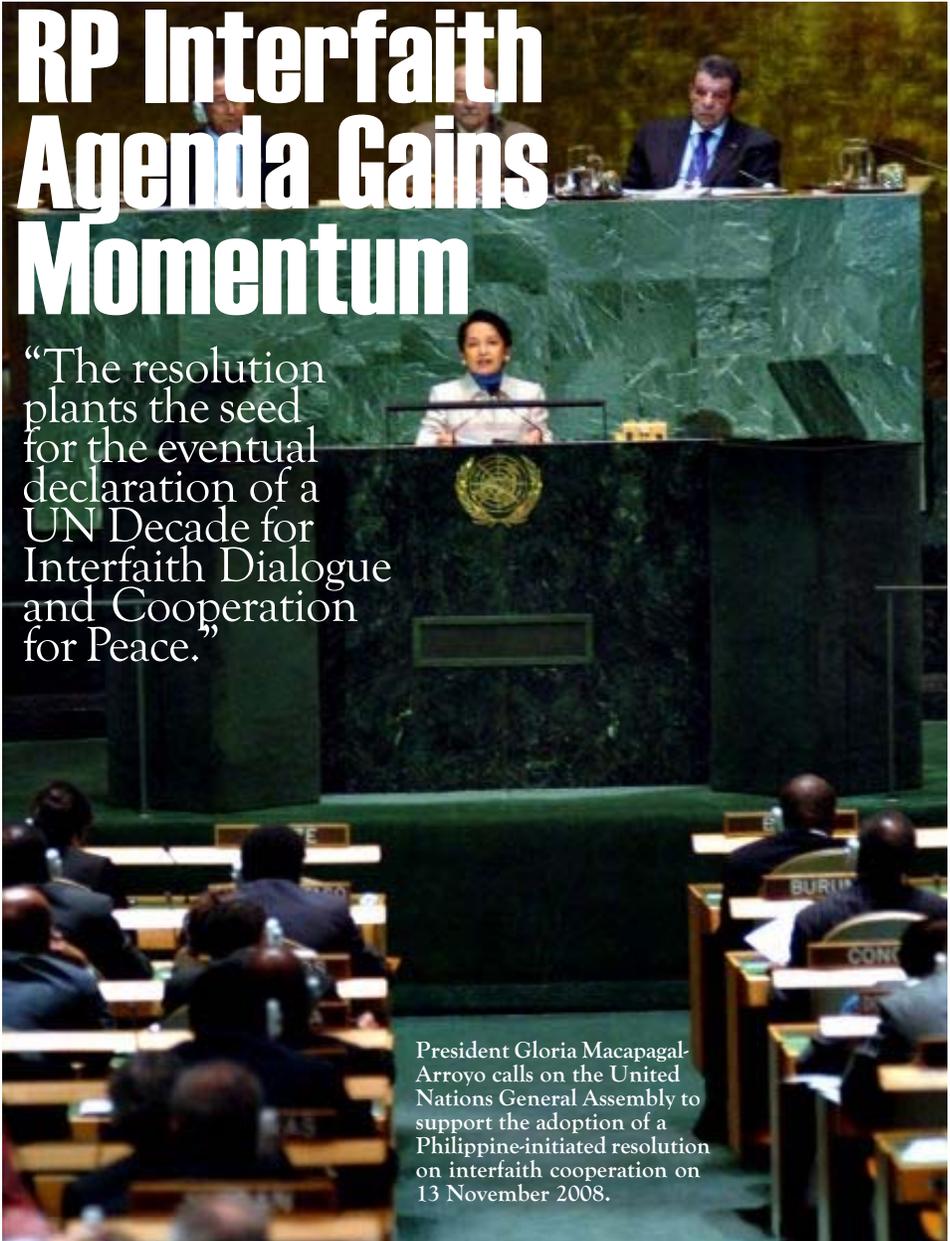
"The resolution planted the seed for the eventual declaration of a United Nations Decade on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace from 2011 to 2020," Ambassador Davide said. "It also encouraged Member States to consider the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions," he added.

Ambassador Leslie Gatan, Philippine Deputy Permanent Representative, said these new elements were obtained after hard-fought negotiations steered by diplomats at the Philippine Mission.

"The Philippine interfaith initiative used to be sponsored only by developing countries," Ambassador Gatan pointed out. "After five years, other countries such as China, Japan and Russia have joined the group of supporters."

The Philippines first drew the attention of the United Nations on issues concerning religious in the secular affairs of the world body when it introduced the resolution in 2004.

The resolution, which affirms that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among



RP Interfaith Agenda Gains Momentum

"The resolution plants the seed for the eventual declaration of a UN Decade for Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace."

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo calls on the United Nations General Assembly to support the adoption of a Philippine-initiated resolution on interfaith cooperation on 13 November 2008.

civilizations and of the culture of peace, lauded the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as integral to building tolerant societies and durable peace.

It also reaffirmed the solemn commitment of the United Nations to promote universal respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The resolution also encouraged the promotion of dialogue among media from all cultures and called on Member-States to consider initiatives that identify practical actions in all levels of society for promoting inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance and understanding.

The resolution mandates preparations for the 2010 International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures with interfaith dialogue at its core, under the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The co-sponsors of this year's resolution are Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait,

Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Russia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

China, Brazil, Egypt, Ethiopia, Grenada, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Macedonia, Peru, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Mali, Paraguay, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tunisia.

Pursuing a Broader Interfaith Dialogue

Statement of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo before the United Nations General Assembly Meeting on Agenda Item 45: A Culture of Peace



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo delivers the Philippine statement during the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Agenda Item 45: A Culture of Peace on 13 November 2008.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR MAJESTIES, YOUR EXCELLENCIES, MR. SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Mr. President, thank you for convening this high level meeting of the General Assembly. And congratulations to the His Majesty the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques for drawing attention to the World Conference on Dialogue held in Madrid last May.

In that conference, Their Majesties, the King of Saudi Arabia and the King of Spain brought together Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and representatives of other religions in the hope of promoting understanding and tolerance among followers of the world's faiths. This is also the hope for this meeting here in New York.

The Philippines fully supports this initiative because we take a great interest in promoting world peace and in encouraging greater cross-religion exchange.

Allow me at the outset to introduce Draft Resolution No. A/63/L24 entitled "Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace," tabled jointly by the Philippines and Pakistan and cosponsored by about 60 states. This draft resolution emerged as a consensus text after a series of consultations.

Among the salient points of the resolution is the affirmation that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute an important part of the alliance of civilizations and of a culture of peace.

The resolution encourages the promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations. It emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. It also affirms that

the exercise of this right carries with it duties and responsibilities necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

The resolution also requests for the proclamation of a UN decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

I commend the resolution for adoption at the close of our plenary meeting tomorrow. This will demonstrate once again our solidarity for the promotion of interfaith dialogue as a powerful aid to ensure durable peace worldwide.

The resolution is especially relevant to the United Nations under the leadership of His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon because for the first time in UN history, the Secretary-General has issued a report on interreligious and intercultural activities.

Likewise, the UNESCO works on interreligious dialogue.

Mr. President:

Regrettably, the story of faith has too often been twisted into a source of despair and destruction among peoples and nations. There are those who wish to instigate religious war. There are those who use faith to divide rather than unite us. They camouflage their evil designs by invoking religious prejudice in the hope of heightening a clash of civilizations.

In this era of propaganda on the clash of civilizations, we must especially pursue broader interfaith dialogue to promote solidarity. Our challenge is to redeem the true meaning of our faith if we are to truly bring peace and prosperity to the world.

We must make this challenge, an opportunity to forge religious understanding but we must not

mistake tolerance and understanding of other faiths and belief systems as a blank check for abuse. We will never accept violence cloaked in religion by anyone at anytime.

Mr. President:

The Philippines has actively advocated interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue is an official policy of the Philippine government. It is also a historical truth among our diverse peoples and beliefs. Faith is ingrained in the lives of our people. It is the primordial seed of humanity. It offers hope, confidence, courage and commitment to make a better global neighborhood.

As we integrate interfaith understanding in development policy, it becomes more effective in resolving conflict.

Our archipelago of more than 7,000 islands has had its share of religious strife, ethnic tension and violence.

For years we have worked to achieve peace in Mindanao in Southern Philippines.

The Peace Process was recently dealt a setback by violence carried out by lawless renegade elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. But we are fully committed to the peace process. There is no alternative to peace. We are working to reach as much progress as possible on peace within the parameters set out by authentic dialogues with communities. However, before we can actively and effectively reactivate the peace process again in earnest, we must first bring stability back to the island, restore order and be able to trust that responsible elements of the MILF have regained control.

Religious leaders can speed up dialogue and reconciliation. They are our partners in the peace-making process.

The historic divide between Christians and Muslims in our country is narrowing dramatically. This is in no small part due to our focus on interfaith dialogue and a willingness to accept the sincerity of those who differ with us in faith.

The Bishop and Ulama Conference is our format for interfaith dialogue. It is a movement of Catholic and Christian bishops and Muslim ulamas organized to promote mutual understanding of faiths and religions for peace.

We all want to see peace and prosperity in the Philippines. Through interfaith dialogue under the leadership of the Bishop and Ulama Conference; through global engagement with the largest possible international involvement, including the UN, Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia and others in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Spain, Sweden and the EU, the US, Japan, Australia and other bilateral ODA partners; and through economic assistance at the community level, we are confident that peace will happen.

Mr. President:

Three years ago, we had the honor of chairing the first Summit on Interfaith Dialogue here in the UN. At the regional level, we are one of the convenors of an ongoing series of Asia-Pacific interfaith dialogues that began in Indonesia in 2004. Subsequent dialogues were held in the Philippines in 2006, New Zealand in 2007 and Cambodia in 2008.

Presently, we are preparing to host the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development scheduled in May 2009.

Our participation today in this initiative on culture of peace advances our relationship with Middle Eastern and Islamic nations. Their support in carrying out our interfaith dialogues habeen critical to our progress in promoting peace in southern Philippines.

What we are doing together here today and tomorrow is every bit more powerful than bullets, military tanks and armaments to fight those who bring misery and violence to people at home or across the globe.

We must follow our faith and have faith in each other if we are to truly lift up the poor, transform war into peace and stamp down the intolerance and hatred wrought by a false reading of the divine message.

We maintain high hopes in inter-faith dialogue as a means for building bridges to replace barriers between communities of different cultures and ethnicity.

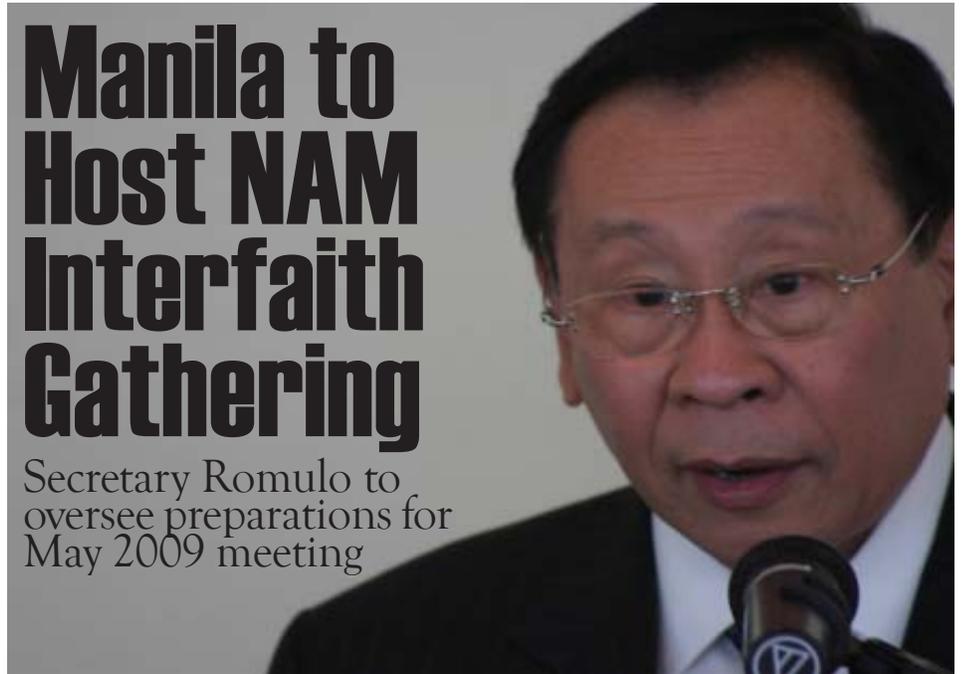
We are here today united by our faith and determined to bridge the valley that unnecessarily divides us, whether we live across the street, across rivers, or across oceans and continents. We can and must bridge the divide through the alliance of civilizations so that we can advance the common good of humanity.

Let us embrace the power of dialogue here today and tomorrow—for peace, development and human dignity.

Let us adopt Draft Resolution No. A/63/L24 Revision One on the “Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.” I, thank you.

Manila to Host NAM Interfaith Gathering

Secretary Romulo to oversee preparations for May 2009 meeting



PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS DIRECTED FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY ALBERTO ROMULO TO OVERSEE THE preparations for the country’s hosting of the Special Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on Inter-Faith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development (MMIFDC-PD) in May next year.

A total of 118 heads of state or governments have already acceded to the Philippines’ offer to host the NAM-MMIFDC-PD. The country made the offer during the 14th NAM Summit in Havana, Cuba in September 2006. Romulo’s designation as lead NAM meeting officer was contained in Administrative Order No. 238 which the President signed on 28 August, two weeks before she left for New York to address the opening session of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly where she also invited the heads of states assembled to the NAM ministerial meeting in the Philippines.

“We maintain high hopes in interfaith dialogue as a means to build bridges rather than barriers between communities of different cultures and ethnicity,” the President said in her speech before the General Assembly on 23 September. “In continuation of this effort, the Philippines will host the first-ever Special Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue for Cooperation and Development in May next year.”

In the same speech, the President thanked the UN, the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and at least nine countries for the role they played in advancing peace and development in Mindanao. She also informed the world body that her administration is refocusing the peace talks “from one that is centered on dialogues with rebels, for one of authentic dialogues with the communities, (and that) the context of our engagement with all armed groups shall subscribe to the UN-recognized principle of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR).”

In AO 238, the President stressed that “inter-faith initiatives have always been the cornerstone of Philippine policy and, as such, the Philippine government created and maintained the enabling environment which will ultimately lead towards peace and development.”

She added that “the Philippines has always maintained its lead on inter-faith initiatives in the international community.” This is evidenced by three world events that the Philippine government has so far hosted since 2005.

These are the Philippines’ “successful chairing of the First Informal Meeting of World Leaders on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace in the United Nations in September 2005; the hosting of the Second Dialogue on Regional Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Development and Human Dignity on March 2006 in Cebu; the launching and chairmanship of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace; and the continuous advocacy of the General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion of Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace since 2004.

The President underscored the “need to constitute a national committee to organize and carry out efficiently and effectively all the scheduled activities relative to the hosting of the Special NAM Meeting.”

Under AO 238, the local governments of Manila and Pasay, together with 13 national government offices and agencies will provide support for the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in organizing the NAM ministerial meeting.

These are the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES), the Departments of Budget and Management (DBM), Education (DepEd), Finance (DOF), Interior and Local Governments (DILG), National Defense (DND), Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Tourism (DOT), Trade and Industry (DTI), Transportation and Communication (DOTC), Office of the Press Secretary (OPS), Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Presidential Council for Values Formation (PCVF), and the Presidential Security Group (PSG)



The Visit of the Secretary General to the Philippines

Arrival honors at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.



With Ambassador Hilario G. Davide Jr. in New York



With Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo.



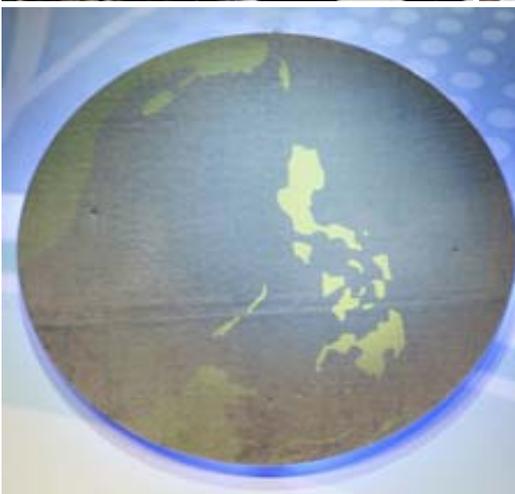
With Filipino peacekeepers.



At the Rizal Monument.



The Secretary General gives homage to Dr. Jose Rizal at the Luneta.



IT WAS THE FIRST VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES of the Secretary General of the United Nations in almost 30 years and when Ban Ki-moon was in Manila from 28 to 30 October, he was given honors befitting a visiting head of state.

The Philippines was the first stop in a four-country swing across Asia by the Secretary General who was given a send off by Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr. and then welcomed upon his arrival by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo.

The Secretary General started his visit with a wreath-laying activity at the Rizal Monument followed by meetings with the United Nations community in the Philippines. He delivered the opening remarks at the Second Global Forum for Migration and Development and then received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of the Philippines.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo later led Filipino peacekeepers in giving him arrival honors in Malacanang where a bilateral meeting and the signing of the United Nations Standby Arrangement System took place. A state dinner followed where the President conferred on the Secretary General the Order of Sikatuna with the Rank of Raja.



GFMD Press Conference with Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. and Special Representative Peter Sutherland

Addressing the opening of the Second Global Forum for Migration and Development.



Mark Garten

Mark Garten

Mark Garten

Junji Morales

Mark Garten



Mark Garten

Inspecting the honor guard at Malacanang Palace with President Gloria Macapagal



Mark Garten

Receiving the Doctor of Laws honoris causa from the University of the Philippines.



Mark Garten

With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo before the start of the expanded bilateral meeting between the Philippines and the United Nations.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for Philippine participation in the United Nations Standby Arrangement System for peacekeeping.



Melin Acosta

Expanded bilateral meeting between the Philippines and the United Nations.



Receiving the Order of Sikatuna with the Rank of Raja.

Melin Acosta

62ND UNGA in Review

Accomplishments of the Philippine Mission during the 62nd General Assembly

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo addresses the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Malacanang Photo

THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL Assembly was an eventful one for the Philippine Mission for a number of reasons. First was the participation for the first time in the proceedings of the General Assembly of a new Philippine Permanent Representative; second was the unprecedented participation of Manila-based delegates in high-level UN meetings; and third was the successful implementation of the initiatives of the Philippines and participation at the main part of the 62nd General Assembly.

CHANGING OF THE GUARDS

In February, former Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. assumed the helm of the Philippine Mission as Permanent Representative. He succeeded Ambassador Lauro L. Baja, Jr.

Immediately upon assumption, Ambassador Davide immersed himself in work and indefatigably steered the Philippine Mission, leading to the fruitful results of his first year in the diplomatic service. The Mission benefited immensely from his wealth of legal, administrative and leadership skills and experience.

A few months later, on 17 June, Ambassador Leslie B. Gatan took over as Deputy Permanent Representative, replacing Ambassador Bayani S. Mercado who was reassigned to Guam as Consul General. Ambassador Gatan's functions were assumed by Minister Eduardo Martin R. Menez who joined the Mission on 25 July. Minister Menez was cross-posted from Singapore where he had been seconded to the Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Another addition was Third Secretary Raphael S.C. Hermoso who joined the Mission after serving for two years with the Philippine Consulate General in San Francisco. His assignment to New York effectively completes the Philippine Mission's ideal staffing pattern.

With this, Ambassador Davide is supported by the following officers: Ambassador Gatan who is

in charge of the Plenary (Political Matters) of the General Assembly; Minister Menez, Second Committee (Financial and Economic Matters); Second Secretary Patrick A. Chuasoto, Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Matters); Second Secretary Elmer G. Cato, Fourth Committee (Peacekeeping, Information and Decolonization Matters); Second Secretary Ivy Banzon-Abalos, Third Committee (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Matters); Second Secretary Emma R. Sarne, Sixth Committee (Legal Matters); Second Secretary Jimmy D. Blas, Second Committee (Sustainable Development Matters); and Third Secretary Hermoso, First Committee (Disarmament and International Security).

MANILA'S HIGH PROFILE PARTICIPATION

The importance the Philippines accords to multilateral diplomacy is underscored by the number of official trips to New York of high-ranking officials led by no less than H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

On 28 September, the President addressed the General Debate of the 62nd Session while Vice President Noli de Castro led the Philippine Delegation to the High-Level Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace on 4 to 5 October. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto G. Romulo also made two official visits to New York in September and December.

In September, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes Jr. addressed the High-Level Meeting on Climate Change organized by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon while Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita addressed the Third Committee on the issue of human rights a month later. Senator Edgardo Angara led the Philippine delegation to the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development also in October.

In addition to the above-mentioned personalities, more than 90 other Manila-based delegates participated in different meetings of the UN in New York throughout 2007.

SALIENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

Philippine participation in the 62nd General Assembly was highlighted by the adoption of Philippine initiatives on interfaith cooperation, migrant workers and persons with disabilities. The Philippines was also able to make its presence felt on the issue of external debt and development and sustainable development of mountains.

One of the major accomplishments of the Philippine Mission was the adoption by consensus of the Philippine-initiated Resolution 62/90 entitled "Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace." The resolution was co-sponsored by more than 50 countries, the highest since the Philippines introduced this resolution in 2004. The key provision of this resolution is the declaration of the year 2010 as the International Year of Rapprochement among Cultures, with interfaith dialogue as its main element.

As mandated by the Philippine-initiated resolution 61/221, the General Assembly held the first High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace from 4 to 5 October. More than 80 delegations, many of which were represented by ministers or religious leaders, addressed the assembly on this issue with the Philippines being represented by Vice President De Castro.

The other salient achievements of the Philippine Mission during the 62nd General Assembly were the adoption by consensus of two other Philippine-initiated resolution 62/132 entitled "Violence against Women Migrant Workers" and resolution 62/127 entitled "Implementation of the World Program of Action concerning Disabled Persons: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities."

With regard to the General Assembly Resolution 62/186 initiated by the Group of 77 and China, entitled "External Debt and Development—Toward a Durable Solution for Developing Countries," the Philippines succeeded in integrating its initiative on

debt for equity in Millennium Development Goals (MDG) projects for the second year in a row to flag the necessity of harnessing a portion of debt payments for MDG-oriented projects as debtors' equities.

General Assembly Resolution 62/196 entitled "Sustainable Mountain Development," initiated by Switzerland, was adopted on the prior understanding between the Swiss and Philippine delegations that the latter will not table a separate resolution on the same subject provided that the Swiss accommodate the proposals of the Philippines to highlight the climate change dimensions of sustainable mountain development.

PLENARY

The main outcome of the participation of the Philippines in the Plenary of the 62nd General Assembly, which dealt with political and related issues without reference to a main committee, was the adoption by consensus of Resolution 62/90 entitled "Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace." It was tabled by the Philippines and co-sponsored by Pakistan and more than 50 other delegations.

The Philippines co-sponsored Resolution 62/7 introduced by Qatar entitled "Support by the United Nations System of the efforts of Governments to Promote and Consolidate New or Restored Democracies." As the founder of this initiative, the Philippines assisted Qatar in its consultation with Member-States to ensure a consensus resolution. Among its salient provisions is the declaration of September 15 of each year as the International Day of Democracy.

The Philippines also co-sponsored and supported two new resolutions that led to their adoption by consensus: Resolution 62/10 entitled "World Day of Social Justice" and Resolution 62/213 entitled "The Role of the United Nations in Promoting a New Global Human Order."

Particular attention was given by the Philippines to two disaster-related resolutions that would benefit the Philippines: Resolution 62/94 entitled "Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations" and Resolution 62/92 entitled "International Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance in the Field of Natural Disasters: from Relief to Development."

FIRST COMMITTEE

Consistent with its position on issues relating to disarmament, the Philippines supported all resolutions that were passed in the First Committee of the General Assembly that encouraged the reduction or elimination of various types of weapons.

The over 50 resolutions that the Philippines supported were clustered into nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; outer space; conventional weapons; regional disarmament and security; other disarmament measures; and international security, and disarmament machinery.

The Philippine position through the years has been to support any and all measures that would lead to disarmament or the enhancement of international peace and security. A resolution of particular importance was on the Southeast Asia Nuclear weapon free Zone (SEANWFZ) which obtained near universal support. The outcome was very positive since this was the first time that the resolution on the SEANWFZ Treaty was introduced in the General Assembly. The establishment of this and other nuclear weapon free zones around the world and the respect accorded to them by Nuclear Weapon States will promote the development of a stable international environment for all States.

The Philippines has also given importance to the elimination of all types of Weapons of Mass Destruction and participated in the High Level Meeting on the 10th



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.
Malacanang Photo

Anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) at the sidelines of the 62nd General Assembly. The Philippines stressed the obligation of States Parties to the Convention to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles. The country also joined the call for States to meet the deadlines as extended by the Conference of States Parties, and called on those few remaining States not party to the CWC to sign and ratify the Convention without delay.

The world faces an even greater threat with the further development and improvement of nuclear weapons; hence, the country supported resolutions that called for the elimination of nuclear arms. The Philippines understands that for the process to succeed, it would best be done through multilaterally agreed solutions in keeping with the UN Charter. The removal of this type of armament from the arsenals of the nuclear weapon states would deter those countries that wish to acquire them and would also eliminate the chance that they would fall into the hands of non-state actors with the will to unleash such weapons upon civilian populations.

The Philippines considers Small Arms and Light Weapons as a key issue and feels that the uncontrolled spread and proliferation of these types of weapons pose a serious threat not only to peace and security but also to economic development and sustained growth. Developing countries are more vulnerable to the illicit trafficking of these weapons, which have fuelled and prolonged conflicts in various parts of the world, maiming and killing millions. Thus, the Philippines emphasized the importance of the early and full implementation of the 2001 UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

SECOND COMMITTEE

During the 62nd General Assembly, Philippine participation in the work of the Second Committee remained focused on important national priorities in

the areas that impact most on the Philippines and other developing countries—the economy and sustainable development.

In addition, the globalized and interdependent nature of trade, finance, sustainable development, and climate change, coupled with the significance of reaching the mid-point of the target for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the release of the fourth report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, has heightened the importance of the work of the Philippine Delegation to the Second Committee. The regular UN activities handled by the Second Committee proceeded with timely and relevant interventions and statements from the Philippine Delegation.

During the opening session of the 62nd General Assembly, no less than H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo delivered the Philippine country statement that focused on poverty alleviation, climate change, the multilateral trading system, migration, interfaith dialogue and human rights.

The participation of Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo in Second Committee-related events centered on his statement at the annual G-77 and China Ministerial meeting where he spoke on Philippine priorities and initiatives such as Philippine efforts through ASEAN to promote development in a holistic manner; the debt-for equity in MDG projects proposal; support for UN reform; migration issues and the Philippine hosting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2008; and Philippine measures on climate change. The G-77 Ministerial Declaration adopted at this meeting also had references to the debt-for equity in MDG projects initiative and the Philippine hosting of the second GFMD.

The Philippines also actively participated in the drafting, discussion and adoption of 33 General Assembly resolutions and one decision under the

Second Committee. Of the 33 resolutions, the resolutions on Agricultural Technology for Development; Sustainable Mountain Development; and on the International Year of Astronomy were separately co-sponsored by the Philippines. As a member of G-77 and China, the Philippines was also considered to have co-sponsored the 29 other resolutions that were submitted by the Group.

Two special events under the Second Committee were also held on the sides of the 62nd General Assembly: the High-Level Meeting on “The Future in Our Hands: Addressing the Leadership Challenge of Climate Change” held on 24 September and the Third High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development on “The Monterey Consensus: Status of Implementation and Tasks Ahead” held from 23 to 25 October.

The High-Level Meeting on Climate Change was attended by Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes while the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development was participated in by Senator Edgardo Angara.

In addition, the Philippines was invited to participate at the Sixth Coordination Meeting on International Migration from 26 to 27 November, where the Philippines as the host of the 2nd GFMD in 2008 was asked to brief participants on developments in this state-led process. Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. attended this meeting and provided information on Philippine preparations for the GFMD.

THIRD COMMITTEE

As it has been in the past, the Philippine Delegation was again at the forefront of initiatives in the Third Committee. The Philippines, as the traditional main sponsor, chaired the negotiations on the draft resolution entitled “Violence Against Women Migrant Workers” which was adopted by consensus and co-sponsored by 36 Member-States. The resolution provides for a gender-sensitive approach to migration and calls for the protection of women migrant workers regardless of immigration status.

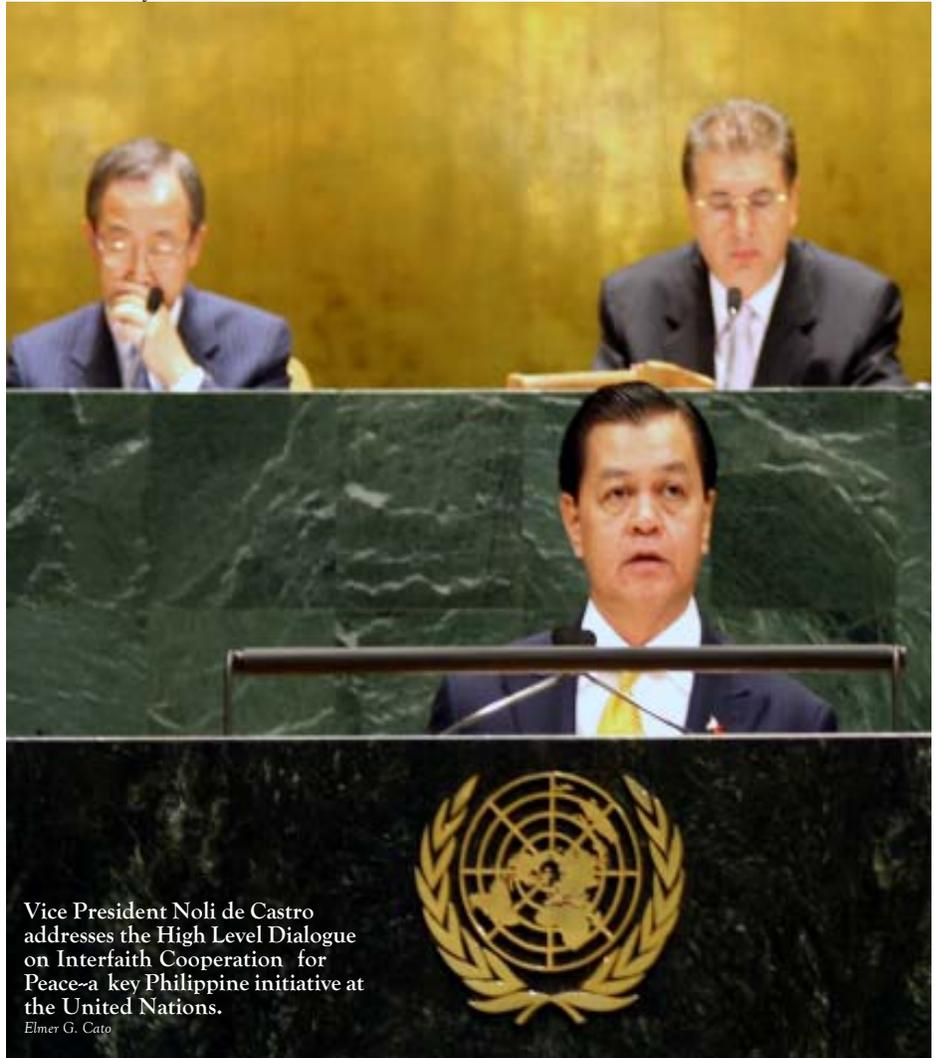
The Philippines, as main sponsor, also chaired negotiations for the draft resolution “Implementation of the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities.” The same was also adopted by consensus by the Third Committee.

The Philippines co-authored the resolution on “Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty,” which was adopted by a recorded vote of 99 in favor to 52 against with 33 abstentions. The Philippines, which played an active role during the intense negotiations, was supported and sustained by the assembly when it opposed so-called killer amendments as well as the proposal to divide the resolution through paragraph voting.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who is also Chair of the Presidential Committee on Human Rights participated in the debate of the Third Committee on Agenda Item 70 (Human Rights). He delivered the Philippine statement concerning the preliminary report on the Philippines of Mr. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions.

Secretary Ermita’s report highlighted the recent efforts by the government to address the issue, including the progress of Task Force Usig and the Melo Commission, as well as an update on the recent human rights protection measures, such as the establishment of the Writ of Amparo in Philippine courts.

The Philippines also participated in the Commemorative High Level Plenary Meeting devoted to the Follow-up to the Outcome of the Special Session on Children, held from 11 to 13 December. Social Welfare and Development Secretary Esperanza Cabral led the Philippine delegation and delivered the Philippine statement stressing the importance of partnerships among governments, non-governmental



Vice President Noli de Castro addresses the High Level Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace—a key Philippine initiative at the United Nations.

Elmer G. Cato

organizations, parents, families, communities and the entire civil society, including children themselves in achieving the principles and objectives of the vision of “A World Fit for Children.” She also chaired one high-level roundtable discussion on promoting healthy lives and combating HIV/AIDS.

The Philippines supported all resolutions that promote the rights of children, indigenous persons, as well as persons with disabilities. This is in line with the Philippine Government’s emphasis in ensuring that these sectors of society are given equal opportunity and access so that they may develop and become productive and contributing members of society.

Among the specific activities of the Philippine Mission include contributing to the adoption of the resolutions on the “Rights of the Child” and “the Girl Child.” The resolution on the rights of the child provides a host of measures to enhance the protection and promotion of the well-being of children.

It also expresses concern over the large number of children who are victims of discrimination and exploitation and urges States to respect and promote the right of girls and boys to express themselves freely, and to ensure that their views are given due weight, in accordance with their age and maturity.

The Philippines also co-sponsored the resolution on the girl child, which stresses the need for full and urgent implementation of the rights of the girl child as guaranteed to her under all human rights instruments.

On the issue of persons with disabilities, the Philippines co-sponsored together with 102 other delegations the resolution on the “Implementation of the World Program of Action concerning Disabled Persons: Realizing the MDGs for Persons with Disabilities.”

The Philippines, being the main sponsor, facilitated the discussions on this resolution that was adopted by consensus. The resolution calls upon all parties to ensure that the disability perspective is appropriately incorporated in the examination of options, decisions and evaluations related to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The Philippines also supported the resolution on the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol,” which called on those States not yet party to the convention to become so at the soonest possible time. The country became a signatory to the Convention on 25 September when Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo signed the treaty.

FOURTH COMMITTEE

During the 62nd General Assembly, the Philippines participated actively in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) which, aside from peacekeeping issues, also handles a wide range of agenda items from the Fourth Committee, including decolonization;



Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo delivers the Philippine statement before the United Nations General Assembly.
United Nations Photo

information questions; peaceful uses of outer space; mine action; effects of atomic radiation; peacekeeping operations; the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and Israeli practices in the occupied Arab Territories.

During its 62nd Session, the Philippines articulated its positions on issues related to peacekeeping, information and peaceful uses of outer space and co-sponsored two resolutions: Assistance in Mine Action (A/62/401) under Agenda Item 29 and Offers by Member-States of Study and Training Facilities for Inhabitants of Non-Self Governing Territories (A/62/411) under Agenda Item 39.

The General Assembly adopted 25 resolutions and two draft decisions presented to it by the Fourth Committee. As it did during the 61st Session, the Philippines supported and voted in favor of all the resolutions except for the “Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories” where it abstained. On the “Question of Western Sahara,” where the Philippines abstained during the 61st Session, the resolution was adopted without a vote this session.

The Philippines abstained in the vote on “Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories” because of its continued disappointment over the seeming bias of the Special Committee against Israel as reflected in the increasing number of abstentions.

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Apart from actively participating in the deliberations and negotiations of various resolutions on administrative and budgetary questions in the United Nations, the Philippines focused its work in the Fifth Committee by bringing its advocacy of development issues to the heart of the operations of the United Nations system.

Inasmuch as the promotion of development is one of the pillars of Philippine policy and the *raison d’être* of the Group of 77 and China, of which the Philippines is a member, the Philippines was vocal in

campaigning for a comprehensive strengthening of the development and economic machinery of the United Nations.

The Philippines argued that there should be a balance in the efforts to restructure the United Nations system for items relating to its three pillars—the promotion of peace, development and human rights. There have already been a lot of proposals for peace and security and human rights but none in the field of development.

The Philippines pushed for the allocation of adequate resources for the enhancement of development-related programs, including the strengthening of the UN’s analytical work in areas where its capacity has been diminished. These proposals should result, among others, in an increase in posts devoted to development in the UN Secretariat’s Department of Economic and Social

Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and regional commissions.

The budget resolution passed by the General Assembly on 22 December contained a provision requesting the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal for a development package in line with the aforementioned rationale. The Philippines actively participated in discussions within the G-77 and China on this development package and the Philippine formulation of the language on the development package was used as the base text for negotiations of the said resolution.

The Philippines was also keenly involved in the issue of conference management. After peacekeeping missions, conference scheduling and servicing constitute the main bulk of the operations of the United Nations. In view of the perennial resource constraints, the Philippines supported measures that would lead to optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources and ensure proper delivery of conference servicing to Member-States and regional groups.

The Philippines is presently a member of the Committee on Conferences and the Philippine delegate, Second Secretary Patrick A. Chuasoto, is its chairman. Mr. Chuasoto was elected by acclamation to the bureau in April.

SIXTH COMMITTEE

The Sixth Committee met from 08 October to 15 November during which it considered resolutions under 19 agenda items grouped in three clusters, namely: Justice and International Law (9 agenda items); Drugs, Crime and International Terrorism (one agenda item); and Organizational and Administrative Matters (nine agenda items).

All the resolutions emanated from the Bureau, coordinated, on behalf of the Bureau of the Sixth Committee, by selected representatives from Member-States, with the exception of the requests for observer status in the General Assembly and the agenda item on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, which were initiated by Mexico and Liechtenstein.

The Sixth Committee adopted by consensus 18 resolutions, six of which are resolutions granting observer status in the General Assembly, and two decisions, one of which dealt with the agenda item



Ambassador Hilario G. Davide Jr. greets President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo upon her arrival at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on 27 September 2007.

on Administration of Justice in the United Nations, a shared agenda item with the Fifth Committee.

The Philippine Delegation participated in all negotiations leading to the adoption of the aforementioned resolutions and decisions. In its statement under Agenda Item 108 on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, the Philippine Delegation called for the early conclusion of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and cited the progress made by the Philippine government in counter-terrorism.

The Philippines cited the passage of the Human Security Act of 2007, the local and international programs and initiatives on interfaith and intercultural dialogue and understanding, and the successful conclusion of the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago delivered a statement on Agenda Item 82 on the Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its 59th Session.

On Agenda Item 137 on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations, the Philippine Delegation joined the consensus in calling for the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to continue the consideration of the legal aspects of the issue, taking into account the proposed implementation of the administration of justice system in January 2009.

The Philippines co-sponsored the resolutions on Agenda Item 81: Report of the UN Commission on International Trade Law on the Work of its 39th Session and on the Request for Observer Status in the General Assembly of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

During the informal meeting on the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on 4 December to review the implementation by Member States of the Strategy, it was agreed that a formal review be made in 2008. During this meeting, the Philippines delivered a statement focusing on the Human Security Act of 2007; the programs of the Philippine Government on poverty alleviation and delivery of social services; the interreligious dialogue initiative and the policies and programs in ensuring the respect for the rule of law and human rights.

On Agenda Item 157, Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Philippines joined other delegations in raising the issue of lack of due notice of parking fees charged on diplomatic vehicles by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, particularly in the John F. Kennedy International and the Newark-Liberty Airports.

PEACEKEEPING

Five decades after it took part in its first United Nations operation, the Philippines continues to not only do its share as a responsible member of the world body but in so doing also make a name for itself in international peacekeeping by emerging as the largest contributor of individual police officers to UN peacekeeping missions.

In 2007, the Philippines became the No. 1 contributor of individual police officers to UN operations with 277 police officers deployed in 10 conflict areas—Afghanistan, Cote d' Ivoire, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia, Sudan, Timor-Leste as well as new UN mission areas such as Georgia, Nepal and Darfur. This number is still expected to increase with the UN also requesting additional peacekeepers for its new operations in the Central African Republic and Chad.

The Philippines also succeeded in having the UN appoint the first Filipino police commissioner in the person of retired Philippine National Police Director Rodolfo Tor who oversees the police



A United Nations peacekeeper from the Philippine National Police prepares a traffic accident report in Kosovo.

component of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor Leste.

During the past year, the Philippine Mission also continued to push for the expansion of Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations. At present, the Philippines has 669 police and military peacekeepers deployed in 10 UN mission areas abroad. In addition to the 277 police officers, the Philippines also has 351 personnel from the Armed Forces of the Philippines deployed as military observers, military liaison officers, staff officers and members of peacekeeping units in five UN peacekeeping areas.

Both H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in her meeting with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in his meeting with Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Jean Marie Guehenno on the sides of the 62nd General Assembly have reiterated the Philippine commitment to continue supporting UN peacekeeping operations.

The Philippine Mission also continues to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the newly created Department of Field Support to secure additional slots not only for military and police peacekeepers in existing and emerging peace operations but also for vacant positions in the UN Secretariat. Through the efforts of the Permanent Representative, the Philippines was able to not only maintain its presence in Haiti but also increase the number of PNP officers deployed there.

Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations also comes with a heavy cost. A Philippine military observer, Lt. Col. Renerio Batalla, died in the line of duty, when he succumbed to malaria while serving as a military observer in Sudan. Eleven Filipino peacekeepers in Kosovo and Timor-Leste were also injured in various incidents in 2007.

In June, the Philippines was given the honor of hosting the first UN Logistics Planners Course at Clark Field, Pampanga. Representatives from more than 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific took part in the two-week

course that highlighted the Philippines' active contributions to UN peacekeeping. In November, Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Hermogenes Esperon Jr. also visited the Philippine peacekeeping contingent in Liberia.

The Philippines, a member of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), is also among the first countries to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against misconduct, especially sexual exploitation and abuse that could be committed by its peacekeeping personnel. The zero-tolerance policy was incorporated in the revised Policy Framework and Guidelines on Philippine Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations that was put together in 2006 by an interagency team and which the Secretary is expected to approve anytime.

The Philippine Mission also worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the Angola Recovery Project that succeeded in recovering and repatriating the remains of two of three Filipinos who were killed in the shooting down of two UN aircraft at the height of the civil war in Angola in the late 1990s. The Philippine Mission, in coordination with the Department, was able to locate the whereabouts of the next of kin of the three missing Filipino crewmen whose DNA samples were needed to help facilitate the identification of the recovered remains.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Although the Philippines is no longer a member of the Security Council, it still actively participates in relevant activities of the body. In 2007, the Philippines took part in two important thematic debates of the Security Council—the open meetings on “Energy, Security and Climate” on 17 April and the “Role of Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security on 6 November.

In the meeting on climate change, the Philippines highlighted its efforts in addressing this

environmental phenomenon. Ambassador Davide enlightened the Council on Philippine adherence to environmental protection by citing a landmark decision of the Supreme Court that gave teeth to the Philippine Constitution's provision protecting and advancing the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

In the meeting that discussed the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, no less than Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo delivered the Philippine statement that put forward practical suggestions to strengthen the partnership of the United Nations and regional organizations.

Aside from stressing the need to make information exchange a backbone of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the Philippines also proposed the formalization of collaboration arrangements to establish clear areas of responsibility and more efficient cooperation. The Philippines also underscored the importance of consultation by the United Nations, particularly the Council, with regional organizations.

As a major troop contributor and regional stakeholder, the Philippines also participated in two open meetings on Timor-Leste. The Philippines took the floor to urge the international community to continue its engagement in Timor-Leste to preserve the gains achieved in its development as a newly independent nation.

As a member of the Informal Consultative Group on Myanmar (ICGM), a grouping of the five Permanent Members of the Council plus concerned countries, the Philippines actively pursued its advocacies to encourage efforts that would lead to national reconciliation and a peaceful transition to democracy in Myanmar. In particular, the Philippines reiterated its call for the immediate release without restrictions of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the inclusion of all parties, including the National League for Democracy in the democratization and constitutional process in Myanmar.

The Philippines has also actively participated in meetings of the General Assembly on the issue of Council reform. In its interventions, the Philippines urged Member-States to take advantage of and continue the momentum of reform by endeavoring to reach and achieve agreement on issues where possible without further delay, even on a gradual manner. The Philippines is of the view that what can be agreed upon now must be adopted now and issues where there is no consensus may be taken up later. The Philippines, in particular, highlighted working methods in the Council as an area where there is a good probability for early agreement.

ASEAN NEW YORK COMMITTEE

Following the adoption by the General Assembly of Resolution 61/144 granting observer status to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the General Assembly, the Philippines, in its capacity as ASEAN Chair, worked for the holding of an ASEAN-UN meeting in Manila and the signing of the ASEAN-UN Cooperation Agreement.

The Philippine Mission, as Chairman of the ASEAN New York Committee (ANYC), closely coordinated with the Department of Political Affairs, the UN focal point for ASEAN, on these two matters until the end of the Philippine Chairmanship of ASEAN in August. The cooperation agreement, officially renamed as Memorandum of Understanding on ASEAN-UN Cooperation, was signed in September at UN Headquarters in New York.

As ANYC Chairman, the Philippine Mission pursued several initiatives to take advantage of the visibility gained from the granting of observer status to ASEAN. The Philippine Mission chaired meetings, which explored the possibility of activities/projects between ASEAN and the United

Nations on areas of common concern, such as climate change, development, energy, health, humanitarian relief and counter-terrorism. Discussions were also held on the institutionalization of modalities for interaction between ASEAN and the United Nations, such as regular meetings between the ANYC and entities of the United Nations.

The Philippine Mission also developed excellent relations with Germany, which was then the President of the European Union (EU). The Philippine Mission hosted the traditional ASEAN-EU Troika luncheon in May that resulted in a joint initiative on climate change. The Philippine and German Missions spearheaded work leading to the convening of an informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on climate change as a global challenge held in the last week of July and first week of August.

The Philippine Mission also encouraged the promotion of camaraderie and solidarity among the ASEAN diplomats in New York through sports activities. The Philippine Mission hosted the first ASEAN Bowling Tournament in June 2007 that inspired other ASEAN missions to follow suit. Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia later organized the ASEAN Golf Tournament and ASEAN Table Tennis Tournament, respectively, in July.

CANDIDATURES

In 2007, the Philippines was reelected to the Human Rights Council for a three-year term (2007-2010) with 179 votes. The Philippines was also elected Vice President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The Philippines also announced the candidature of Senator Santiago, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). To underscore the importance Manila places on this candidature, Ambassador Davide personally met with 136 Permanent Representatives, eight Charge d' Affaires and four Deputy Permanent Representatives from 148 Member-States to campaign for Senator Santiago.

The Philippine Mission also sent notes verbales to each of the Permanent Missions announcing the ICJ candidature of Senator Santiago and soliciting support for such candidature. Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo and Ambassador Davide also

hosted two luncheons and a dinner for all the Permanent Missions in New York to formally introduce Senator Santiago.

To raise her profile, Senator Santiago delivered a statement on the Report of the ICJ at the 42nd Plenary Meeting of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly on 1 November, and on Reservation to Treaties and Shared Natural Resources during the General Debate in the Sixth Committee on the Agenda Item Report of the International Law Commission on 2 November.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE INITIATIVE

In addition to the UN General Assembly resolution on the promotion of interfaith dialogue for peace, the Philippines initiated two other intergovernmental processes—the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace.

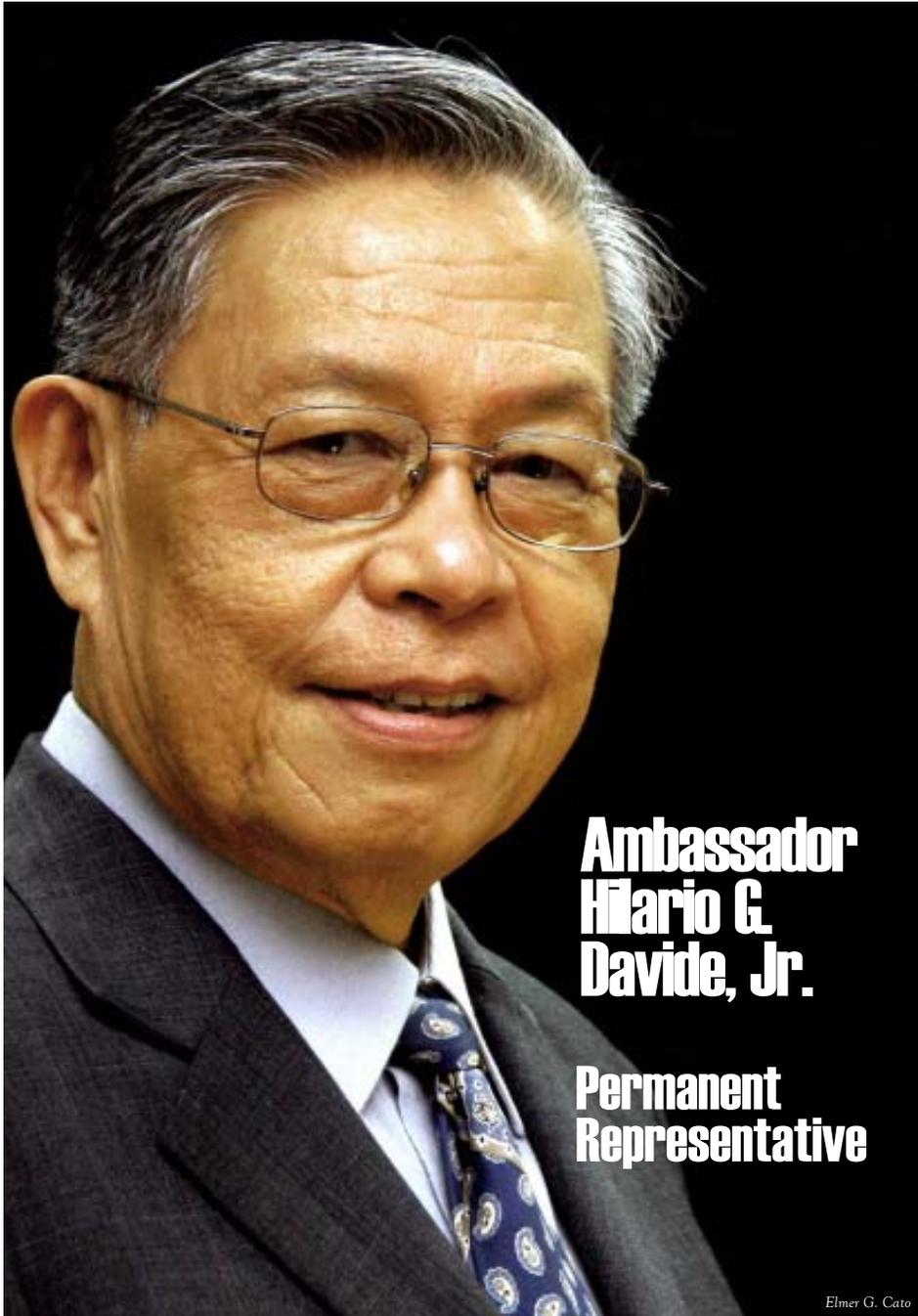
The Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace held its second meeting in New York on 27 September, where it adopted a Ministerial Statement calling for, among other things, the formulation of an Action Plan to implement the provisions of the 2005 Summit Declaration down to the grassroots level.

The Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, founded by the Philippines on 24 March 2006, commemorated its first anniversary on 24 March through a reception organized by the Philippines at the Church Center in New York. On 28 September, Secretary Alberto G. Romulo launched at the Unicef House the book containing the Proceedings of the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace held on 22 June 2005.



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo greets Ambassador Jorge Arguello of Argentina as he is being introduced by Ambassador Hilario G. Davide Jr. at a reception hosted by the Philippine Mission on 26 June 2008.

Marcelino A. Solano Jr.



**Ambassador
Hilario G.
Davide, Jr.**

**Permanent
Representative**

Elmer G. Cato

AMBASSADOR HILARIO G. DAVIDE JR. HAS ALWAYS been a leader by example. His professional life has been, for the most part, devoted to public service. He is known to maintain his professional competence and integrity amidst attempts to influence his official action and judgment. His service record stands as proof that a public servant can make a difference, without being beholden to no interest other than the public's.

Ambassador Davide was born on 20 December 1935 in the remote mountain barangay of Colawin, in Argao, Cebu. He walked barefoot to the Argao Elementary School as a boy, and then went to the Abellana Vocational High School for his primary and secondary schooling, respectively. He worked his way through college, at the University of the

Philippines (UP) where he initially took up the two-year course of Associate in Arts in 1953 and then entered the UP College of Law in 1955 as an entrance scholar. A year later, he became a member of the Order of the Purple Feather, the College's honor society. He also became a member of the Student Editorial Board of the College's legal publication, the *Philippine Law Journal*. He obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Jurisprudence in 1958, and his law degree in 1959. In his last year in the UP College of Law, he became a member of two international honor societies, the Phi Kappa Phi and the Pi Gamma Mu.

He entered government service early on in his professional career. From 1959 to 1963, he was the Private Secretary to the Vice Governor

of the Province of Cebu and then to its Governor. And, like his parents, he also became involved with the academe. From 1962 to 1968, he was a faculty member of the College of Law of the Southwestern University in Cebu City. This university would later confer upon Ambassador Davide his Doctor of Laws (*Honoris Causa*) degree (1999).

In 1970, Ambassador Davide was elected as delegate of the 4th District of Cebu to the Constitutional Convention of 1971. He became Chairman of the Committee on Duties and Obligations of Citizens and Ethics of Public Officials. He was among the three delegates who introduced the most number of reform proposals. The reforms adopted under the Constitutional Convention were, however, short-lived. Public unrest over deteriorating economic conditions and the suppression of political rights, as well as the desire of then President Ferdinand Marcos to perpetuate himself in power, heralded the declaration of martial law in 1972.

Ambassador Davide became one of martial law's staunch critics. In 1978, he was elected assemblyman for Cebu in the Interim Batasang Pambansa. An oppositionist in the ruling party-dominated legislative body, he was its first Minority Floor Leader. As assemblyman, he filed the most number of bills of national significance, as well as resolutions to lift martial law. He also sought legislative investigations of graft and corruption in government and reported violations of human rights.

Shortly after the overthrow of the Marcos regime through the "People Power" revolt in February 1986, then President Corazon C. Aquino convened the Constitutional Commission (CONCOM) of 1986, and appointed Ambassador Davide one of the 50 Commissioners. He was the Chairman of the Commission's Committee on the Legislative Power and a member of the Committees on the Executive Power, the Judiciary, Style and Public Hearings.

As Chairman of the Committee on the Legislative Power, he was the principal author and sponsor of Article VI of the 1987 Constitution on the Legislative Department. He was also the sponsor of the Ordinance appended to the 1987 Constitution providing for the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives. He submitted the most number of resolutions, a majority of which were incorporated in the Committee reports. The CONCOM framed the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, which was overwhelmingly ratified by the electorate in a plebiscite.

In February 1988, President Aquino appointed Ambassador Davide as Chairman of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). He was the principal sponsor of the COMELEC's rules of procedure. While serving in the COMELEC, he was designated as Chairman of the Presidential Fact-Finding Commission created pursuant to Administrative Order No. 146 that investigated the 1989 military rebellion. On the basis of a bill which was certified by the President to Congress and which later became Republic Act No. 6832, this Commission was superseded by a Fact-Finding Commission to conduct a thorough investigation of the failed coup d'etat of December 1989, and recommend measures to prevent the occurrence of similar

attempts at a violent seizure of power. Ambassador Davide was appointed as Chairman and he was deemed resigned as Chairman of the COMELEC.

On 24 January 1991, Ambassador Davide was appointed by President Aquino as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. From 2 January 1996 to 30 August 1997, he sat as a member of the Senate Electoral Tribunal. He was also the Working Chairman of the Court's Third Division from 2 January 1996 to 7 September 1997, and Chairman of the House of Representative Electoral Tribunal from 1 September 1997 to 30 November 1998.

Ambassador Davide was appointed by President Joseph Ejercito Estrada on 30 November 1998 as the 20th Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court. Forthwith, he took his oath of office at the new Bonifacio Shrine in the City of Manila. He became known as the Centennial and Millennial Chief Justice.

Ambassador Davide would later become the presiding judge in the impeachment trial against President Estrada. There, he personified the dignity and impartiality of the Constitution itself. When the popular protests spilled into the streets, his timely intervention on behalf of "the welfare and will of the people" by administering the oath of office as President of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as a constitutional successor averted violence and imminent military takeover of power, and brought the crisis to an end. Although the moral authority of the Supreme Court carried the day, Ambassador Davide's action was sustained by the Supreme Court in a precedent setting decision thereby putting an end to the question of the legitimacy of the succession to power of Vice President Arroyo.

Upon his retirement in 2005, President Arroyo appointed Ambassador Davide as Senior Presidential Adviser on Electoral Reforms. He recommended measures and policies to the President that would help reform the country's electoral system. The appointment was announced during a Council of State meeting convened by the President.

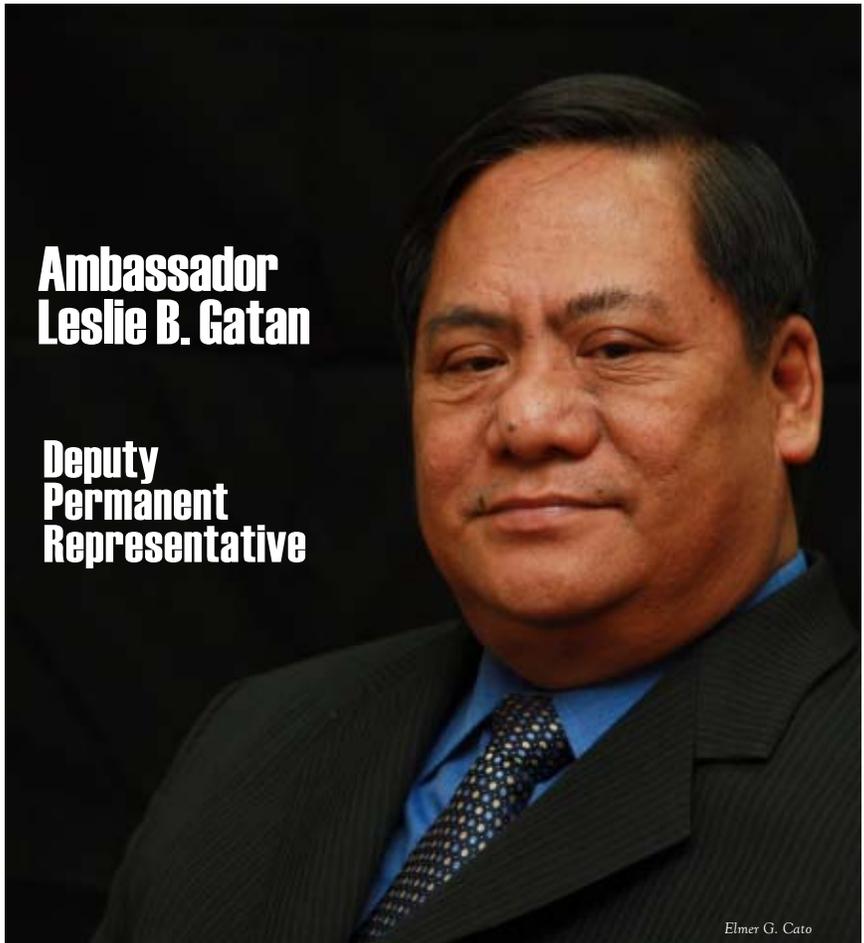
President Arroyo also announced her intention to appoint Ambassador Davide as Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations in early 2006. In January 2007, he was extended by President Arroyo an ad interim appointment as such and took his oath of office on 14 January 2007. In view of the recess of Congress, he was again extended an ad interim appointment by President Arroyo on 21 February 2007, took his oath of office and assumed his position in New York on 27 February 2007.

Ambassador Davide is the recipient of many awards. In 2002, he was conferred the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service—a singular honor that is the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize. He was recognized for his life of principled citizenship and his profound service to democracy and the rule of law in the Philippines.

Apart from the Magsaysay Award, Ambassador Davide is also the recipient of the 2005 Most Distinguished Alumnus Award given by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association; the 2003 Man of the Year Award by the *Philippine Free Press*; the 2000 Filipino of the Year Award by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*; the 2001 Rule of Law Award; the 1999 The Outstanding Filipino Award in Environmental Law; the 2003 Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion Award for Legal Aid by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines; and 13 honorary degrees in doctoral in law and humanities.

In August 2006, he was conferred the ABA International Rule of Law Award in recognition of his extraordinary leadership in advancing the Rule of Law by the American Bar Association (ABA) Rule of Law Initiative on the occasion of the ABA's 2006 Annual Convention.

Ambassador Davide is married to the former Virginia Jimenea Perez with whom he has five children: Hilario III (an incumbent city councilor in Cebu City), Joseph Bryan Hilary, Sheryl Ann, Noreen, and Delster Emmanuel.



Ambassador Leslie B. Gatan

Deputy Permanent Representative

Elmer G. Cato

LESLIE B. GATAN IS A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER WHO JOINED THE PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SERVICE in 1983 after passing the requisite entrance examinations. Prior to joining the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Gatan served for eight years as Senior Management and Audit Analyst of the Department of Science and Technology.

In the Home Office, Ambassador Gatan's record of service consisted of being the Director at the Office of United Nations and Other International Organizations from 1983 to 1986; Director at the Office of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Affairs from 1994 to 1997; and Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Policy Matters from 2001 to 2003.

In the foreign service, he served as Third Secretary and Vice Consul at the Philippine Embassy in Colombo; Consul at the Philippine Consulate General in Milan; First Secretary at the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva; Minister and Consul General at the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok as well as Deputy Permanent Representative to the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific; Minister at the Philippine Embassy in Brussels; and Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative at the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York.

Ambassador Gatan holds the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Bachelor of Business Management and Master in Urban and Regional Planning. He earned units leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Laws and Master in Business Administration. He underwent several trainings in the Philippines and abroad such as security issues, international economics, international relations, among others.

Ambassador Gatan participated in over 500 international conferences around the world. In the United Nations in New York, he is the Philippine Government's advocate for the promotion of interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace and development.

At the Home Office, he is informally dubbed the father of TIPS - Technological Information Pilot System that brought the Philippines into the loop of selected developing countries promoting South-South economic cooperation.

He also served as Secretary-General of the National Committee on Illegal Entrants that handled such cases as illegal fishing by foreign fishermen and human trafficking. He helped set up the Philippine Council on ASEAN and APEC Cooperation that facilitated the Government's decision-making process in these two regional bodies.

Ambassador Gatan is married to Lydia Debbie Mijares-Gatan.

SUGO JUNE-DECEMBER 2008

EDUARDO M.R. MEÑEZ, A CAREER MINISTER IN THE PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SERVICE, HAS been with the Philippine Mission since July where he currently handles Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Second Committee issues.

Mr. Meñez is a second-generation diplomat who joined the government service in 1990 by working for Sen. Leticia Ramos Shahani when she was the Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. After taking and passing the Foreign Service Officers examination, he joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1991 where he was assigned to the Office of the Chief Coordinator under the Office of then Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus.

In 1992, Mr. Meñez was detailed to the Office of the President of the Philippines as a Director in the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs. During his four years in Malacañang, he also assisted the Office of Presidential Protocol among other capacities as the program coordinator for the President Fidel V. Ramos's visits to the Czech Republic and twice to the United Kingdom.

Posted to the Netherlands in 1996, he subsequently served the next six years under senior career Ambassadors Rodolfo Sanchez and Eloy Bello, Jr., handling various aspects of bilateral, multilateral, consular and assistance to nationals work. While in The Hague, Mr. Meñez was able to attend courses in public and private international law at The Hague Academy of International Law, and earn units in a masters degree in European Law and Policy at what is now The Hague University.

Upon return to Manila in 2002, Mr. Meñez was detailed to the office of the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives where he served as Senior Foreign Policy Adviser. It was during this time that the Philippine Citizenship Reacquisition and Retention Act of 2003, otherwise known as the Dual Citizenship Law, and the Overseas Absentee Voting Law of 2003 were debated in Congress and eventually enacted into law.

In 2004, he was taken in by then Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Domingo Albert as a Special Assistant in the Office of the Secretary where he served through the transition into the term of current Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo.

Mr. Meñez was posted to Singapore in 2005 where he was detailed as the Philippine representative to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat. During his two years in Singapore, his responsibilities in the Secretariat included being director in charge of three APEC Working Groups dealing in Intellectual Property Rights, Marine Resource Conservation, and Fisheries, and as Chair of the Staff Social Activities Committee. Mr. Meñez is married with two children.

PATRICK A. CHUASOTO GRADUATED *Cum Laude* from the Ateneo De Manila with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management, Honors Program. Aside from getting a Diploma in Trade and Commercial Diplomacy from the Foreign Service Institute of the Philippines, Mr. Chuasoto also earned units for his Masters Degree in International Studies from the University of the Philippines.

Mr. Chuasoto entered the Foreign Service in August 1998 after placing third in the Foreign Service Officers entrance examinations. Prior to joining the Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Chuasoto was an entrepreneur and licensed real estate broker and appraiser. He was a topnotcher in the licensure examinations for brokers and appraisers (first and fifth, respectively).

In the Home Office, Mr. Chuasoto served in the Office of ASEAN Affairs from 1999 to 2002, first as Assistant Director for Economic Cooperation then Acting Director beginning 2000.

In 2003, Mr. Chuasoto was posted to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines in New York. He currently handles the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, the ASEAN New York Committee, the Security Council and UN reform issues. Mr. Chuasoto previously covered the First Committee and the

Patrick A. Chuasoto Second Secretary



Elmer G. Cato

Third Committee. Mr. Chuasoto was a member of the Philippine Delegation to the Security Council (2004-2005) where he specialized on the application of UN Security Council sanctions. He was recently elected chairman of the Committee on Conferences and rapporteur of the Fifth Committee for the 63rd General Assembly. Mr. Chuasoto is a member of American MENSA.

Eduardo M.R. Meñez Minister



Elmer G. Cato

ELMER G. CATO WAS A JOURNALIST and overseas worker before joining the foreign service.

He began his journalism career in Ang Pahayagang Malaya when he was a 16-year-old freshman at De La Salle University. From there, he went on to report for the Manila Chronicle, Reuters News Agency, Kyodo News Agency, GMA 7, Philippine News and Features, and Saudi Gazette, among others.

He served as Nation Editor of the Philippine Daily Globe and Today newspaper before joining the Indonesian Observer in Jakarta as Executive Editor.

In 1998, he entered the Department of Foreign Affairs after passing the Foreign Service Officers Examination and became Special Assistant to Foreign Affairs Secretary Domingo L. Siazon Jr. and later Vice President Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.

Mr. Cato served as Officer in Charge of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement and later as head of the DFA Regional Consular Office in Central Luzon.

In 2003, he was assigned to the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York and was a member of the Philippine Delegation to the Security Council from 2004-2005.

He is presently the Philippine Delegate to the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, the

Elmer G. Cato Second Secretary



Emma R. Sarne

Special Committee on Peacekeeping and the Committee on Information. As the peacekeeping officer, he oversees Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations.

He also serves as the press officer of the Philippine Mission and was recently elected vice chairman of the Fourth Committee for the 63rd General Assembly. Mr. Cato is married with two children.

MARIE YVETTE BANZON-ABALOS SERVES as the Mission's expert and negotiator on social policy issues at the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council.

Her work is focused on human rights, gender and children issues, public health, social development, migration and the social dimensions of transnational organized crime. She facilitates the inter-governmental negotiations on Philippine-sponsored resolutions at the UN on issues of trafficking in persons, disability and violence against women migrants.

Prior to her assignment at the Philippine Mission, Ms. Banzon-Abalos was Principal Assistant at the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations of the Department of Foreign Affairs covering social policy issues. In 2001, she was appointed Acting Director in the same office, covering Philippine participation in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the oversight and management of the International Commitments Fund appropriation in the national budget.

Ms. Banzon-Abalos' has written in the *UN Chronicle* on the Philippines' approach in addressing trafficking in persons. She has also been invited several times as resource speaker

Marie Yvette L. Banzon-Abalos
Second Secretary



Elmer G. Cato

on issues of trafficking in persons, migration and multilateral negotiations. Ms. Banzon-Abalos graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University where she joined the faculty teaching Biology. She passed the Foreign Service Officers Examination of the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1999.

A NATIVE OF ILOCOS NORTE, JIMMY D. BLAS received his Bachelor of Laws degree from the Ateneo de Manila in 1963 and was admitted to the Philippine bar the following year.

He represents the Philippines in the Second Committee where he participates in the discussions and negotiations on economic development. He was the Coordinator for the Group of 77 and China during the Chairmanship of the Philippines in 1995.

Mr. Blas started his career in government service in 1966 when he was appointed Senior Executive Assistant in the Office of the President of the Philippines assigned to assist the Executive Secretary.

He left for New York City in 1969 to work for an investment firm but returned to Manila in 1971 to serve as Vice President of the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE).

After leaving FAPE in 1974, he assumed the position of Treasurer and Member of the Board of Zambales Mining Corporation, and concurrently as Treasurer of FERREIT Realty Corporation as well as Black Mountain Mining Co.

He again returned to New York City in 1976 to work as International Officer/Assistant Manager of the Philippine National Bank, New York

Jimmy D. Blas
Second Secretary



Elmer G. Cato

Branch until he resigned in 1986. He stayed in New York City working for various financial institutions from 1986 to 1992, from 2001 to 2002 including his stint as Assistant Vice President of the Philippine National Bank, New York Branch, from 1998 to 2001.

Mr. Blas is happily married to Milagros F. Laya with whom they have two children, George and Catherine.

EMMA ROMANO SARNE SERVED AS THE Acting Director of the Office of Personnel and Administrative Services' Administrative Division and Assistant Board Secretary of the Board of Foreign Service Examinations of the Department of Foreign Affairs. She also served as Principal Assistant of the Personnel Management Division. She received her training at the Foreign Service Institute where she served as a Senior Foreign Affairs Research Specialist of its Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies prior to joining the DFA in 2000.

As Second Secretary and Legal Counsel of the Mission, Ms. Sarne participates in negotiations and discussions in the Sixth (Legal) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. She also participates in negotiations and discussion on three Plenary issues: the Law of the Sea, Sustainable Fisheries, and, in an assisting capacity, the Culture of Peace agenda. She forms part of the Secretariat of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and coordinates with UN system organizations and Religious NGO members of the Forum.

Ms. Sarne, who is also the Elections officer of the Mission, has participated in both local and international courses dealing on Law of the Sea issues. Ms. Sarne was also an Instructor of Political Science at the University of the

Emma R. Sarne
Second Secretary



Elmer G. Cato

Philippines in Tacloban from 1991 to 1993. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and also studied law at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She has audited a course on War, Crime and Terror under Professor Tom Gerety at the New York University School of Law-Hauser Global Law School Program.

RAPHAEL S.C. HERMOSO IS A GRADUATE of the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

He received his Masters Degree in Public Administration with concentration in International Security Policy from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York.

A native of Meycauayan Bulacan, Mr. Hermoso joined the Department of Foreign Affairs after passing the Foreign Service Officers examinations in 2002.

His first assignment in the Department was as Special Assistant to the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy.

In 2004, Mr. Hermoso was designated as Assistant Director of the North Asia Division of the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs, which is in charge of the Philippines' foreign relations with China and Mongolia.

Mr. Hermoso was given his first foreign posting in 2005 when he was assigned as Vice Consul to the Philippine Consulate General in San Francisco.

After serving two years in San Francisco, Mr. Hermoso was transferred to the Philippine Mission where he represents the Philippines in the First Committee of the United Nations General

Raphael S.C. Hermoso
Third Secretary



Elmer G. Cato

Assembly which tackles issues related to disarmament and international security.

Mr. Hermoso is also in charge of selected issues in the Third Committee, namely, children, indigenous people and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Hermoso is happily married to the former Joana Bautista. They have two children Kelly and Kelsy.



Romeo E. Seguis
Attaché

ROMEO E. SEGUIS IS THE MOST SENIOR STAFF OFFICER OF THE PHILIPPINE Mission. A native of Surigao del Norte, Mr. Seguis is an alumnus of the Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City. He joined the Department in 1968 as Radio Operator and Cryptographer at the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok.

Mr. Seguis has served in various capacities in the Home Office, including Coratel at the Office of the Secretary. He was Protocol/Ceremonial Officer at the Office of Protocol; Passport Processor at the Office of Consular Affairs; and Technical Inspector-Audit Examiner, Assistant Director of Internal Audit Division, Acting Director of Fiscal Management Division, Acting Director of Cash Division, and Administrative Officer of the Office of Fiscal Management.

Mr. Seguis has extensive foreign service experience having been assigned at the Philippine Embassies in Bonn, Wellington and Stockholm and the Philippine Consulates General in Hong Kong and New York. Mr. Seguis was assigned to the Philippine Mission in 2005 where he initially served as Attaché & Administrative Officer and later as Assistant & Records Officer. Mr. Seguis is married with three children.



Arturo V. Romua
Attaché

ARTURO V. ROMUA IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF THE PHILIPPINE Mission and assists on Plenary Matters. Born in Pangasinan, Mr. Romua has a political science degree from the University of Santo Tomas. He joined the Department in 1979 and served in the Office of Political Affairs; Office of Intelligence and Legal Affairs; Office of Consular Affairs; Office of the Undersecretary for International Economic Relations; and the Philippine Claims and Compensation Commission Secretariat. He also served in the Philippine Embassies in Singapore, Jakarta and Riyadh. He is married with five children.



Tomas A. Valerio
Attaché

TOMAS A. VALERIO, JR. IS THE Finance Officer of the Philippine Mission. Mr. Valerio was born in Manila and studied at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila where he obtained his business administration degree. He joined the Department in 1978 and served in various positions with the Office of Fiscal Management and the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy. Before his assignment at the Philippine Mission, he served at the Philippine Embassies in Beijing, Washington D.C. and Tokyo and the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong. Mr. Valerio is married with three children.



Christina T. Manelski
Attaché

CHRISTINA TRINIDAD-MANELSKI assists in Fifth Committee matters and in candidatures. Ms. Manelski is from Manila and has a foreign service degree from the Lyceum of the Philippines. An MBA candidate at De La Salle University, she joined the Department in 1982 and served in the Office of Consular Affairs, the Office of Personnel and Administrative Services, the Office of United Nations and Other International Organizations, and the Office of the Secretary. She had served in the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo. She is married to Devon Manelski of New York.



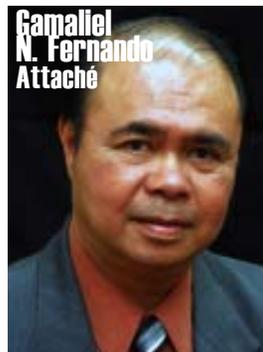
Camille M. Macalintal
Attaché

CAMILLE MACALINTAL, WHO ASSISTS in the Plenary and interfaith matters, has been in public service for 30 years. Born in Manila, she served at the Development Academy of the Philippines before joining the Foreign Service Institute in 1978 as one of its pioneers. She entered the Department in 1992 as assistant in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and later with the Office of Protocol; the Office of United Nations and other International Organizations, and the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy. Ms. Macalintal is a social science graduate of the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She is married with four sons.



Olivia S. Osias Magpile
Attaché

OLIVIA S. OSIAS-MAGPILE ASSISTS in Second Committee matters. Born in Manila, she has a foreign service degree and a masters degree in public administration from the Lyceum of the Philippines. She joined the Department in 1988 and served in the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations, the Maritime and Ocean Affairs Center, the Economic Diplomacy Unit of the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the European Affairs and the Office of International Labor Affairs. She also served in the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta as Economic Attaché. Ms. Osias-Magpile also assisted in Third Committee issues at the Philippine Mission. She is married with two children.



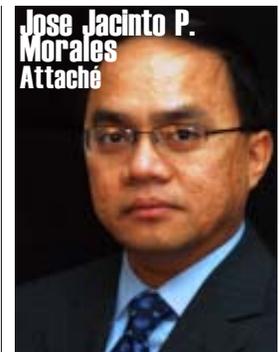
Gamaliel N. Fernando
Attaché

GAMALIEL N. FERNANDO ASSISTS in Sixth Committee matters and is Assistant Administrative Officer of the Philippine Mission. A native of Bulacan, Mr. Fernando, holds a commerce-marketing degree from the University of Sto. Tomas and a masters degree in management and business management from the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Mr. Fernando joined the Department in 1991 and had served at the Office of the Undersecretary for International Economic Affairs and the Office of American Affairs. He was assigned to the Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver. Mr. Fernando is married with three children.



Felix V. De Leon
Attaché

FELIX V. DE LEON, JR. ASSISTS in Third Committee issues. Mr. De Leon is from Batangas and is a political science graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. He joined the Department in 1988 and served at the Office of Intelligence and Security and the Office of Consular Affairs. He was also Officer in Charge of the Regional Consular Office in La Union. Mr. De Leon was assigned to the Philippine Embassy-Mission to Vienna where he was principal assistant of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations Office in Vienna for Crime and Drugs and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Mr. de Leon is married with three children.



Jose Jacinto P. Morales
Attaché

JOSE JACINTO P. MORALES ASSISTS in Fourth Committee and peacekeeping matters and is also the Protocol Officer of the Philippine Mission. Born in Manila, Mr. Morales has a political science degree from the Ateneo de Manila University and masteral units from the Ateneo School of Government. Mr. Morales joined the Department in 1989 and served in the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Office of the Secretary, and the Office of Consular Affairs. He was assigned as Attaché at the Philippine Embassy in Hanoi and as Consular Assistant at the Philippine Consulate General in New York. Mr. Morales is married with three daughters.



Marcelino A. Solano Jr.
Attaché

MARCELINO A. SOLANO, JR. IS the Communication Officer of the Philippine Mission. Mr. Solano is from Laguna and holds a bachelor of arts degree from CAP College. He also has units in commerce from the Jose Rizal College. Mr. Solano entered the Department in 1979 and served in the Coratel of the Office of the Secretary. His overseas service include postings as communications officer at the Philippine Embassies in Kuwait, Beijing and Kuala Lumpur. He has attended numerous trainings in communications and computer programming. He is married with four sons.



Muizzuddin Y. Bahjin
Attaché

MUIZZUDDIN YAP BAHJIN IS THE latest addition to the Philippine Mission. He was born in Puerto Princessa, Palawan and graduated from the University of Santo Tomas with a bachelor of science degree in medical technology. He has been with the Department since 1998, serving in the Office of Middle East and African Affairs as well as the Central Records Division. Prior to his assignment in New York, Mr. Bahjin served at the Philippine Embassy in Stockholm. He is currently designated as assistant in both the First and Fifth Commit-



Michelle M. Jayag
Attaché

MICHELLE C. MAURICIO-JAYAG assists in First Committee and interfaith matters at the Philippine Mission. Born in Cavite, Ms. Jayag has a political science degree from New Era University and masteral units in Southeast Asian Studies at Centro Escolar University. She also took various training courses at the Foreign Service Institute and participated in an exchange program under the Japan International Cooperation Agency. At the Home Office, Ms. Jayag served with the Office of Consular Affairs and the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs. Ms. Jayag is married with three children.



Barbra G. Hilario
Attaché

BARBRA GISON-HILARIO IS THE Cultural Officer of the Philippine Mission and assists in the Third Committee. Born in Manila, Ms. Gison-Hilario is the daughter of a diplomat and grew up in different countries. She has degrees in foreign service and in public administration from the Lyceum of the Philippines and the University of Sto. Tomas. She joined the Department in 1997 and served at the Office of Consular Affairs and the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy. She participated in an exchange program under the Japan International Cooperation Agency and is married to Mr. Arthur Hilario.



Nova L. De Lara
Attaché

NOVA L. DE LARA IS THE Property Officer of the Mission and the secretary of Ambassador Leslie B. Gatan, the Deputy Permanent Representative. Born in Tacloban City, Ms. De Lara has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City. Ms. De Lara joined the Department in 1999 and was assigned as an assistant at the Disbursing Unit of the Office of Personnel and Administrative Services. Her first foreign assignment is at the Philippine Mission. A member of the Department of Foreign Affairs Chorale, Ms. De Lara is married with one child.



Leonard A. Abaya
Assistant

LEONARD A. ABAYA IS THE longest serving staff of the Philippine Mission, having joined the mission in 1989 as a clerk-assistant. In addition to his administrative duties, he assists in protocol and official and social functions of the Philippine Mission. Mr. Abaya has the distinction of having served a total of seven Permanent Representatives, namely Claudio Teehankee, Sedfrey Ordenez, Narcisa Escaler, Felipe Mabilangan, Alfonso Yuchengco, Lauro Baja Jr. and Hilario Davide Jr. Mr. Abaya was born in Manila and studied at De La Salle University where he obtained his bachelor's degree in psychology.



Socorro P. Eustaquio
Assistant

SOCORRO P. EUSTAQUIO IS THE receptionist-telephone operator of the Philippine Mission. Born in Cabanatuan City, she is a product of the Philippine Normal College (now the Philippine Normal University). Ms. Eustaquio was a public school teacher, clerk and court stenographer and had served with the Manila City Government, the Senate, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. She joined the Philippine Mission in 1995 as a clerk and later as secretary to the Deputy Permanent Representative and the Permanent Representative. Ms. Eustaquio is married with two sons with whom she has two granddaughters.



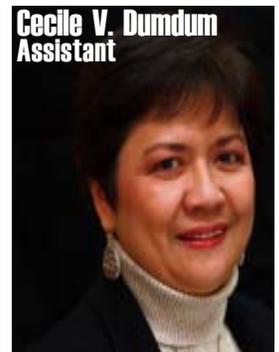
Margarita M. Nepomuceno
Assistant

MARGARITA M. NEPOMUCENO assists in Second Committee matters. Ms. Nepomuceno, who traces her roots to Batangas and Cebu City, is a communications graduate of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. Ms. Nepomuceno joined the Philippine Mission in 1999 as an assistant. She first served in the Fourth Committee where she also assisted in peacekeeping matters. As an assistant in the Second Committee, Ms. Nepomuceno handles issues related to Sustainable Development and Migration and serves as an alternate secretary to the Permanent Representative. Ms. Nepomuceno is a widow with two children.



Efren R. Recana
Assistant

EFREN R. RECANA JOINED THE Philippine Mission in 2006. A native of Lucena City, Mr. Recana performs clerical functions at the Office of the Deputy Permanent Representative in addition to his regular work as official driver of the Mission's service vehicle. Before joining the Mission, he has performed in Tokyo, Jakarta, Singapore and Bangkok as saxophonist and flute with famed Filipino bands. He also served as Store Manager of Village Wine Store in Jersey City, New Jersey. Mr. Recana is married to Yolanda D. Recana, attache of the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. They are blessed with a son.



Cecile V. Dum Dum
Assistant

CECILE V. DUMDUM JOINED THE Philippine Mission in 2007 as assistant to the Permanent Representative. Born in Surigao City, she holds a management degree from the Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City. Before her assignment in New York, Ms. Dum Dum served as Director III at the Program Management Office of the Supreme Court which was in charge of implementing the comprehensive reform program of the Judiciary and where she handled various donor-assisted projects. She also served with the National Economic Development Authority. Ms. Dum Dum is married and has four children.

The Campaign for the International Court of Justice



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, with Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr., welcomes Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad of the United States during a reception on 26 June 2008 as part of the campaign for the candidature of Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago for a seat in the International Court of Justice.



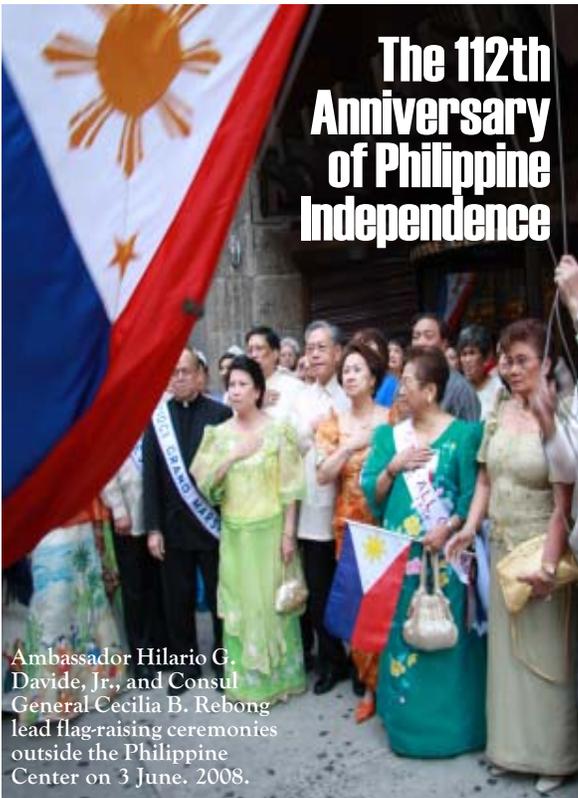
The President introduces Senator Santiago.



Ambassador Davide gives the opening remarks.



Philippine Mission Officers and Staff.



The 112th Anniversary of Philippine Independence

Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr., and Consul General Cecilia B. Rebong lead flag-raising ceremonies outside the Philippine Center on 3 June, 2008.



Independence Day Parade, 3 June 2008



Ambassador and Mrs. Hilario G. Davide Jr. welcome the Deputy Secretary General Asha Rose Migiro.



Independence Day Parade, 3 June 2008



Independence Day Reception at the United Nations, 12 June 2008



Philippine Mission Officers and Staff at the 12 June reception at the United Nations.

SUGO JUNE-DECEMBER 2008



A sumptuous Christmas and Birthday Feast at the Residence.



Christmas & Birthday Celebration

Ambassador & Mrs. Hilario G. Davide, Jr. with officers and staff and their families.



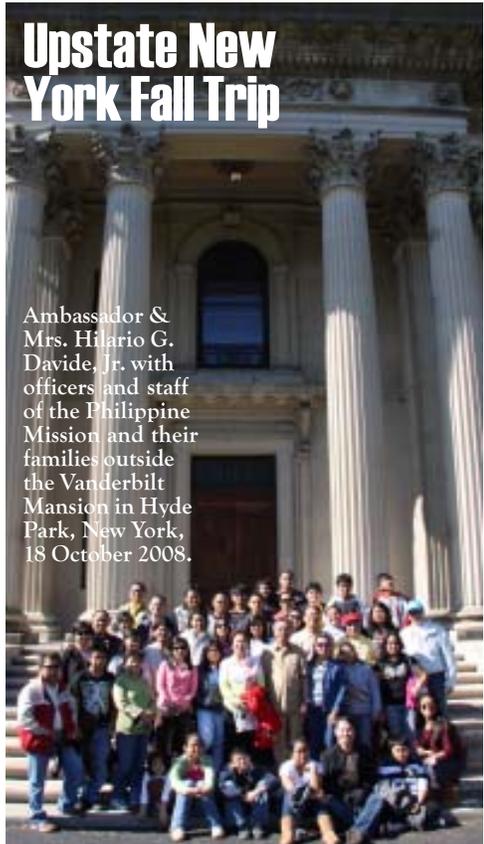
Santa Claus hands out gifts to the children.



Staff and family members dance to the music.

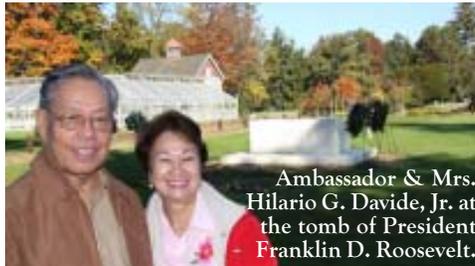


Ambassador Davide turns 72.



Upstate New York Fall Trip

Ambassador & Mrs. Hilario G. Davide, Jr. with officers and staff of the Philippine Mission and their families outside the Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park, New York, 18 October 2008.



Ambassador & Mrs. Hilario G. Davide, Jr. at the tomb of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Second Floor, Vanderbilt Mansion



Ground Floor, Vanderbilt Mansion



BBQ Party

Officers and staff at a barbecue party hosted by Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr. at his residence on 24 May 2008.



The Philippine Mission to the United Nations

THE PERMANENT MISSION WORKS FOR THE PROMOTION and protection of Philippine interests within the framework of the world organization, which is the only existing universal forum of sovereign equals reconciling its members' diverse interests. Hence, the Mission is principally responsible for undertaking the multilateral aspects of Philippine diplomacy. It deals with the broad range of interests of 192 members of the United Nations as well as other states and political entities, and the UN Secretariat.

The multilateral dimension distinguishes the work of the Permanent Mission from the tasks of the Embassy of the Philippines in Washington, DC, which is responsible for the bilateral relations of the Philippines with the United States. Under the supervision of the Embassy in Washington, DC, the Consulate-General in New York, and consulates in other American cities, provide assistance and protection to Filipino nationals, and perform other consular functions.

The Permanent Mission, under the direction of the President and the supervision of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, undertakes the protection and promotion of the vital national interests of the Philippines in the following areas: international cooperation for development and operational activities; international peace and security, including peacekeeping; social and humanitarian affairs, including the interests of Filipino migrants around the world; common heritage of mankind; progressive development of international law; new international economic order; new world information and communication order; and the protection of Filipino nationals in the UN.

Sugo is published biannually by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations in New York.

EDITOR

Elmer G. Cato

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Jose Jacinto P. Morales
Marcelino A. Solano Jr.

PHOTO CREDITS

United Nations Photo Library
Office of the President

Philippine Center
556 Fifth Avenue
New York 10036
Telephone 212.764.1300
Facsimile 212.840.8602
rmission@gmail.com
www.un.int/philippines