



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Secretary of Foreign Affairs Dr. Alberto G. Romulo visits Berne



Secretary of Foreign Affairs Dr. Alberto G. Romulo and Mrs. Rosie Lovely Romulo pose with Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino and the Embassy staff on 10 October 2005 at the Embassy's Reception Lounge. Secretary Romulo was accompanied by Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose S. Brillantes (center, back row).

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto G. Romulo visited Berne on 10 October 2005 after inaugurating the new Philippine Mission to the WTO in Geneva upon the invitation of Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino to inspect the Residence and the Chancery Building. Accompanied by Mrs. Lovely Romulo and Undersecretary Jose Brillantes, Secretary

Romulo was invited to lunch at the Ambassador's Residence in the old town of Berne. Then Ambassador Tolentino escorted him to the Chancery Building at Kirchenfeldstrasse and briefed him on the leased property. The Embassy leased the premises for 10 years in 2003 with an option to purchase starting in January 2008.

Official Cantonal Visits to Lucerne and Solothurn



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino (seated, right) and her fellow Ambassadors from Asia and the Pacific are welcomed by President Dr. Max Pfister in Lucerne on 16 September 2005.

Ambassador Rora Navarro Tolentino continued actively promoting Philippine trade, culture, business process outsourcing and tourism by making a cantonal visit to Lucerne on 16 September 2005, together with other Ambassadors of the Asia Pacific Group and their spouses. Lucerne Governing Council President Max Pfister received the visiting Ambassadors and briefed them on the history and programs of Lucerne. President Pfister was accompanied at the reception by Governing Councillor Dr. Markus Durr, Head of the Department of Health and Special Affairs; and Mr. Thomas E. Fueter, Chief of Protocol, Canton of Lucerne. The visit included a company tour of the top selling producer of elevators and escalators, Schindler Ltd. in Ebikon.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino is welcomed at the Solothurn Rathaus by Governing Council President Walter Straumann on 02 December 2005.

Ambassador Tolentino also made an official bilateral cantonal visit on 02 December 2005 to the Canton of Solothurn. Governing Council President Walter Straumann received Ambassador Tolentino and her delegation at the Rathaus together with Vice Chancellor Yolanda Studer and Mr. Dagobert Cahannes, Media Affairs Chief. The Ambassador mentioned the little known fact that Solothurn is the home Canton of the famous Swiss sculptor, Richard Kissling, who executed the Rizal Monument in 1912. After the lunch hosted by the Governing Council, Ambassador Tolentino and her delegation were given a guided tour of the historic city of Solothurn, the seat of the Bishop of Basel.

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ASPAG AMBASSADORS FETE SWISS FOREIGN MINISTER



Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister *Micheline Calmy-Rey* (center left) is hosted a lunch by Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (seventh from the right) and other ASPAG Ambassadors on 13 September 2005 at the Hotel Allegro Kursaal in Berne.

Ambassadors of the Asia-Pacific region hosted its traditional annual luncheon in honor of Federal Councilor and Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, at the Hotel Allegro Grand Casino Kursaal in Berne on 13 September 2005. As the Dean of the ASPAG Ambassadors, Ambassador Ri Tcheul of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delivered the welcome remarks. In response, Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey cited the economic importance of Asia, stating that Switzerland is determined to increase its presence in Asia by focusing on

new areas of shared interests; by strengthening partnerships to promote peace and security; and by boosting economic and cultural ties. She added that because of the enormous challenges and opportunities in Asia, Switzerland seeks a more coordinated approach to its relations with the ASPAC both in the regional (**ASEAN, SAARC, and ASEM**) and bilateral levels. The exchange of remarks was followed by informal discussions of issues of common concern and a toast to the enhancement of friendly relations between the ASPAC countries and Switzerland.

CONFAB ON FEDERALISM AND MULTICULTURALISM, SUCCESSFULLY HELD IN MANILA

An International Conference on Federalism and Multiculturalism was held successfully in Manila Peninsula Hotel, Makati City last 3-4 October through the initiative of the Philippine Embassy in Berne and funding support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The two-day Conference was organized by the University of the Philippines' Center of Local and Regional Governance (CLRG) in collaboration with the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. The SDC funded the Conference through the Swiss Embassy in Manila.

During the Opening Ceremony on 3 October, Undersecretary Franklin M. Ebdalin delivered the Welcome Remarks followed by Ambassador Tolentino who outlined the conceptualization and eventual realization of the Conference in her Opening Remarks.

The Conference drew the participation of major stakeholders including Philippine Senators and Members of Congress, national and local government officials, members of civil society and the academe. Noted international experts on federalism and multiculturalism, led by Prof. Dr. Thomas

Fleiner of the Institute of Federalism in Fribourg discussed the structure and workings of various models of federal systems in different countries. The panel discussions addressed specific questions relevant to the current proposals in the Philippines to change its system of government from Presidential to Federal / Parliamentary form.

The proposal for a shift to a Federal system is not a new idea in the Philippines as Filipino political leaders like Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who contributed to the scope and content of the Conference, have been advocating it since 1982. However, it has taken a new life now as Congressional leaders led by Speaker Jose de Venecia are actively advocating Charter change (including the proposed shift to a federal / parliamentary system of government).

A significant outcome of this International Conference is the working linkage that has now been established between the CLRG under the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) of the University of the Philippines and the Institute of Federalism of the University of Fribourg (IFF) in Switzerland.

The President's Message for the New Year

Ang paglakas ng ating piso ay senyas na sa Bagong Taon, isang magandang bukas ang naghihintay sa atin.

Napatunayan na natin na kaya nating tukuyin ang ating pagsisikap sa mga solusyon sa mga problema at manatili ang atensyon sa pinakamabuting interes ng taumbayan.

Ang mga tagumpay na ating natamo sa ekonomiya ay nagbibigay-kapangyarihan sa atin upang tumawag ng pansin at makilahok sa mundo -upang protektahan ang ating mga maggagawa sa ibayong dagat, palawakin ang pag-unlad, labanan ang terorismo at pairalin ang kapa-yapaan sa bansa, lalo na sa Mindanao.

Ang mga karangalang natamo ng ating mga kababayan sa iba't-ibang larangan ang patunay na kapag desidido ang Pinoy, kayang-kaya ang dapat gawin.

Gayunpaman, kinilala natin na ang Pilipinas ngayon ay nahahati sa isang bansang handang umangat ang ekonomiya, at isa namang may sirang sistemang pulitikal na nagiging hadlang sa pag-unlad.

Let us break from the past and face a brave new future.

Political change is the handmaiden of permanent economic prosperity.

Harapin natin ang Bagong Taon na may pag-asa at higit na patibayin ang ating determinasyon upang isulong ang kapakanan ng bansa.

Happy New Year to all!

(Sgd) **GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**
President

The Secretary's Christmas Message

UNITED IN PURPOSE,
UNITED IN PEACE AND PROGRESS

On behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Philippine Foreign Service, I greet and wish the Filipino people, especially our noble and hardworking overseas workers and their families, peace, happiness and good health for this Christmas.

This Yuletide season finds the Filipino nation with a renewed sense of hope and confidence in its future.

In 2005, under the leadership of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, we moved the nation further on the road to peace and development.

We consolidated the gains of our peace-building efforts in the country and with the community of nations. With the support of our peace partners in the ASEAN and the OIC, the successful conclusion of negotiations for peace in southern Philippines is available. With our peace partners in Europe, we continue to fortify channels of communication for dialogues for peace with the NDF.

At the United Nations, where we served as a member of the Security Council in the past two years, we fostered dialogue between faiths, cultures, civilizations as an instrument of peace. We chaired the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and led global consensus-building cooperation for funding infrastructure, country-side growth and capacity-building programs and projects.

We brought Robert Tarongoy and many other countrymen home, even as we endeavored to protect and promote the well-being of fellow Filipinos who work and live overseas.

United by a common love of country and by our desire to contribute to nation-building, the Filipino people achieved much this year. Working together, we as a nation can and will achieve more in the years to come.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

(Sgd) **DR. ALBERTO G. ROMULO**
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Ongoing Overseas Absentee Voter's Registration



Attaché Ruben C. Atienza assists Ms. Ma. Fe Esperanza Caridad Tañedo as she registers for Overseas Absentee Voting at the Embassy.

Registration for the National Elections on 14 May 2007 is going on at the Embassy until 31 August 2006. All Filipino citizens abroad who are at least 18 years old on the day of the elections, not disqualified by law, and are **temporary residents** in Switzerland may register for Overseas Absentee Voting at the Embassy.

Permanent residents (such as those married to Swiss nationals and those holding Swiss passports or Swiss Settlement Permits C) are *disqualified* from voting unless they execute an affidavit of intention to return to the Philippines and establish permanent residency there within the next three years.

Those who have already registered in 2003 and who voted in May 2004 need not register anymore as they are already included in the list of registered overseas absentee voters for Switzerland. For more information on overseas voter registration, please contact the Embassy or visit the Comelec website at www.comelec.gov.ph.

20th Anniversary of Samahang Pilipina Berne



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino and her husband, Atty. Abelardo Tolentino, Jr. were Guests of Honor at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Samahang Pilipina Berne, led by Ms. Lily Angelical (left).

Samahang Pilipina Berne celebrated its 20th Anniversary at Restaurant Don Camilo in Berne on 24 September 2005, with Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino and her husband as Guests of Honor.

In her inspirational remarks, Ambassador Tolentino congratulated SP Berne and also cited the programs of the organization, which is actively affiliated with Babaylan Switzerland (network of Filipino women in Europe), recipient of the prestigious *BANAAG Presidential Award for Overseas Organizations in 2002*. She encouraged them to continue steadfastly in their activities for the benefit of Filipinos in Switzerland.

SP Berne was founded in 1984 by Ms. Anny Hefti and seven other Filipinas to promote camaraderie among fellow-Filipinos. It holds fund-raising activities for humanitarian projects in the Philippines, and organizes cultural events in Switzerland.

In its past 20 years of existence, SP Berne has organized several workshops and seminars on empowerment, peer counselling, anti-racism and cultural integration. It has supported visiting cultural groups in Berne such as the Philippine Concert Chorus, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, the UP Singing Ambassadors and the Manila Vocal Ensemble, to name some. SP Berne has likewise conducted German language classes for beginners and intermediate students to facilitate the integration of newcomers in Switzerland.

Samahang Pilipina Lucerne turns 20



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino delivering her remarks as the Guest of Honor during Samahang Pilipina Lucerne's 20th Anniversary Celebration at Grand Hotel National in Lucerne on 10 September 2005. Looking on at the right is Ms. Liza Lohr-Ceniza, President of SP Lucerne.

In her inspirational remarks, Ambassador Tolentino praised SP Lucerne as a Filipino community organization that lives up to its vision and purpose. She congratulated the group for consistently supporting projects in the Philippines and for actively promoting Philippine culture in Lucerne. She specifically mentioned SP Lucerne's classroom project at the Hinandayan Primary School in Sitio Hinandayan, Barangay Kamagong, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte.

On its 20th anniversary, SP Lucerne donated US\$ 4,000 for the construction of one classroom in Agusan del Norte, to pair with another classroom in the same primary school that was donated by the Filipino Community in Switzerland from the proceeds of the joint celebration of Philippine Independence Day together with the Embassy.

Ilokandia-Pangasinan Club Induction of Officers



On 10 December 2005, the Ilokandia-Pangasinan Club held the induction of its officers in Lucerne. Minister and Consul General Lamberto V. Monsanto was the Guest of Honor and administered the oath-taking of the newly-elected officials of the organization.

Swiss Companies accept Filipino Trainees



Trainee Angelino V. Gabon (second from the right) with Mr. Michael Staehli (leftmost) of Staehli Atelier AG during their visit to the Embassy on 27 October 2005 to call on Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino and Minister and Consul General Lamberto V. Monsanto (rightmost).

Three Filipino professionals were accepted this year as trainees in Swiss companies under the Philippine-Switzerland Agreement on the Exchange of Professional and Technical Trainees signed on 9 July 2002, marking the full implementation of the Agreement.

Under the Agreement, which took effect in 2003, both Filipino and Swiss citizens can stay and work legally in each other's country for a maximum period of 18 months, receiving salaries commensurate to their professional qualifications, the actual work they are doing, and the prevailing local standards. The Agreement aims to promote professional development, cross-cultural interaction and language proficiency among the participants.

The trainees are Mr. *Roland S. Payog*, an Electronics and Communications Engineering graduate from Wesleyan University in Nueva Ecija, who arrived in May 2005 to work with APM Technica AG in St. Gallen; Mr. *Angelino V. Gabon*, a goldsmith for four years at the Hans Brumann Jewelry Shop in Manila prior to coming to Switzerland, who arrived in August and is now working with Atelier Staehli AG in Berne; and Mr. *Clint Marvin B. Arceño*, an Electronics and Communication Engineering graduate from Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle University, Manila and formerly working with Intel Technology (Phils.) as Product Engineer, who joined APM Technica AG in October.

APM Technica AG is a high tech instrumentation company specializing in optics, fine mechanics and electronics. Located in the Canton of St. Gallen, the company is now on the final stages of the documentation process for opening a branch office in Manila which is expected to be operational in the summer of 2006. Atelier Staehli AG in Berne manufactures jewelry for the local Swiss market and for export to European countries. It has tied up with the Hans Brumann Jewelry Shop in Manila to make jewelry using local gold and employing Filipino craftsmen. The Philippine-made jewelry would be exported initially to Switzerland and then later to other European markets.



Trainee Clint Marvin V. Arceño (second from the left) with APM Technica AG President Arthur Philipp (second from the right) and Vice-President Stefan Mattle (rightmost) after their call on Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino (center) and Minister and Consul General Lamberto V. Monsanto (leftmost) at the Embassy on 08 November 2005.

ASPAG Ambassadors visit Water Plant in Zurich



ASPAG Ambassadors posing for a souvenir photo at the end of their visit to the Holiger AG water plant in Zurich.

ASPAG Ambassadors visit the Canton of Jura



The Asia and Pacific Group (ASPAG) Ambassadors visited the La Ferme de Cernieuvillers and the Maurice La Croix Watch Factory in Canton Jura as part of the Group's continuing program to visit jointly various business establishments which are representative of the dynamic sectors of Switzerland's vibrant economy.



ASPAG Ambassadors looking on as a watchmaker performs his expertise at the Maurice La Croix S. A. (MLSA) Watch Factory.

The Ambassadors were invited to view the display of the various models of the MLSA watches crafted at the Saignelöegier factory - from simple classic designs to luxurious diamond studded ones - all bearing the brand name of "Swiss Made" Maurice Lacroix. The Group was also shown the 2005-2006 Masterpiece Collection of MLSA, with ornate finishings, as precious timepieces in the proud Swiss tradition of passion for detail and precision.

National Day of Liechtenstein



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino attended the official celebration of the National Day of the Principality of Liechtenstein on 15 August 2005 in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. The official celebration opened with a Holy Mass held at the field near the Vaduz Castle attended by the Royal Family, high ranking government officials of Liechtenstein led by Prime Minister Othmar Hasler and Mr. Klaus Wagner, President of the Federal State Parliament.

An open air reception for the public at the castle grounds was followed by an official luncheon at the Restaurant Torkel located by the Princely vineyards with the Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other dignitaries in attendance. An impressive display of fireworks highlighted the festivities.

Lady Ambassadors fete Formin of Liechtenstein

The Lady Ambassadors accredited to the Principality of Liechtenstein hosted a joint lunch on 5 September 2005 in honor of Madame Rita Kieber-Beck, Liechtenstein Minister of Foreign Affairs, of Cultural Affairs and of Family and Equal Opportunity, in Vaduz, capital of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Speaking as the most senior among the lady diplomats, Ambassador Tolentino explained to Foreign Minister Kieber-Beck that the lunch-meetings are aimed to be occasions for informal and friendly discussions to exchange views on topics of mutual interest.

Minister Kieber-Beck expressed her appreciation for the working lunch invitation where she established personal contact with the group. In her view, the informal network facilitates the conduct of diplomacy by "women power". Discussions flowed freely and topics ranged from UN reforms, membership in the European Union, European Free Trade Association membership, developments on humanitarian assistance and cultural exchanges.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino (fourth from the right) with other Lady Ambassadors accredited to the Principality of Liechtenstein, shown here with Liechtenstein Foreign Minister Rita Kieber-Beck (center) and members of her staff, after the lunch-meeting jointly hosted by the Lady Ambassadors in her honor in Vaduz on 05 September 2005.

Dinner with Uri Cantonal Officials at the Residence



Uri Cantonal Officials were honored with a dinner of Filipino cuisine at the Residence. Governing Councilor Josef Dittli, Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino, Mrs. Marlis Stadler and Minister and Consul General Lamberto V. Monsanto at the elegantly set dinner table.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino tendered a dinner at her Residence in Berne on 02 November 2005 in honor of the Governing Council of the Canton of Uri, represented by Governing Council Vice President Dr. Markus Stadler, Governing Councilor Josef Dittli, and their respective spouses, Mrs. Marlis Stadler and Mrs. Doris Dittli. The return dinner was given in appreciation of their hospitality during the Embassy's official cantonal visit to Uri on 31 May 2005. Among the political and economic topics discussed at the dinner were migration, integration and the possibility of Uri accepting technical trainees from the Philippines.

PCGG Officials visit Switzerland and Liechtenstein



PCGG Commissioner Nicasio Conti (second from left) and PCGG Director J. Miguel (third from left) confer with PCGG's Swiss and Liechtenstein lawyers at the law office of Dr. Heinz Frommelt in Vaduz.

Presidential Commission for Good Government (PCGG) Commissioner Nicasio A. Conti and Director J. Ermin Ernest Louie R. Miguel visited Switzerland and Liechtenstein on 21 to 22 December 2005 to confer with Dr. Sergio Salvioni and Dr. Heinz Frommelt, PCGG's lawyers in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, respectively. The PCGG officials also had the opportunity to meet with Liechtenstein Judge Carlo Ranzoni in Vaduz to discuss important related matters.



PCGG Commissioner Nicasio Conti (rightmost) and PCGG Director J. Miguel (second from the right) pose with Judge Carlo Ranzoni (seated) in the latter's office in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, along with PCGG's lawyers and Minister and Consul General Lamberto V. Monsanto (center).

Bayanihang Filipino Biel-Bienne Cultural Evening



In line with the government's program of recognizing organizations with outstanding contributions to Philippine progress and development, Ambassador Tolentino continued to attend Filcom activities where she was the Special Guest.

Another significant event was the Bayanihang Filipino Biel-Bienne Cultural Evening in the canton of Berne on 22 October, which aimed to raise funds for charitable projects and programs in the Philippines. Ambassador Tolentino congratulated the leaders and members of the BFB for their successful presentation and extolled them for upholding the organization's name "Bayanihan" as they actively help our less fortunate kababayans in the Philippines.

Induction of Caraga-Swiss Officers



On 4 November, the six officers of CARAGA-SWISS (CS) led by Ms. Lochie Dulguime were inducted by Ambassador Tolentino at ceremonies marking the inclusion of CS as the newest addition to Switzerland's Filipino Community organizations. The group comprises of 35 Filipino-Swiss residents and their families who trace their origins from the four provinces of Region XIII, namely *Agusan del Norte*, *Agusan del Sur*, *Surigao del Norte* and *Surigao del Sur*, and the two chartered cities of *Butuan* and *Surigao*.

Filipinas Chorale Group 10th Anniversary



The 10th Anniversary of the Filipinas Chorale Group was successfully celebrated in Berne on 3 December, with Ambassador Tolentino as Guest Speaker. The group, which started with a membership of 12, was founded in 1995 under the leadership of Ms. Jocelyn Hirt-Vargas, a Filipina married to a Swiss national. Since its founding, the Filipinas Chorale Group has been actively participating in Philippine Independence Day celebrations and other community projects including fund-raising activities.

PAG-IBIG Overseas Program (POP) Day, Zurich



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino attended the Pag-ibig Overseas Program (POP) Day organized by POP Representative Ms. Rosalinda Sauter on 6 November 2005 in Zurich that was aimed at updating overseas Filipinos on the various programs of the Pag-ibig Fund designed for Filipinos residing abroad.

Mr. Amado Isabelo Dizon III, Officer-in-Charge, Overseas Operations, International Operations Group of Pag-ibig Fund in Manila, briefed the audience on the various available services of the Pag-ibig Fund. He said that as POP members, they could avail themselves of a maximum loan amount of 2 million pesos to build their second homes in the Philippines, or improve their homes, for those who already own a house in the Philippines. The easy term loans have minimal annual interest rates of 8-12%.

Pops Fernandez in concert at Dietikon



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino enjoys a light moment with "Concert Queen" Pops Fernandez during her concert with Randy Santiago at the Stadthalle Dietikon on 23 September 2005.

The Hiligaynon Group, Berne



The Hiligaynon Group in Berne celebrated a Halloween Party on 29 October with Ambassador Tolentino as Special Guest. In December, the Group came up with their first Newsletter inviting members to contribute their ideas and other articles for inclusion in the next issue.

Joint Family Picnic in Lausanne



Ambassador Rora Navarro Tolentino, Ambassador Manuel A.J. Teehankee and Ambassador Enrique A. Manalo (left to right) pledge to regularly hold an annual joint picnic to foster closer camaraderie and a team spirit among the officers and staff of the three Philippine posts in Switzerland.

The three Philippine Foreign Service posts in Switzerland held a joint Family Day Picnic at the Route de Vidy Grounds in Lausanne on 31 July 2005 to promote camaraderie among the staff and family members of the three Philippine posts in Switzerland in line with the one-country-team approach.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino led the group of 27 staff members, spouses, children and private staff of the Philippine Embassy in Berne that met with the two other groups from Geneva led by Ambassador Enrique A. Manalo, Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, and Ambassador Manuel A.J. Teehankee, Permanent Representative to the WTO.

The get-together from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. was highlighted by the introduction of all officials of the three posts in the two tents brought by Geneva PM to facilitate interaction and socialization. Participants shared the sumptuous lunch of grilled meat, grilled fish, Bratwurst sausages, chicken, rice, leafy salads, fresh fruits and Philippine dishes made the day an enjoyable one. After lunch, some played badminton and other ball games in the shade, while others chose to unwind in the sun. The children enjoyed the sunny day playing on the sandy Lake Geneva beach of the picnic grounds.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino (in blue) poses with Berne PE staff and family members at the Route de Vidy Picnic Grounds in Lausanne during the joint family picnic. The sandy beach of Lake Geneva and the warm summer climate made it look like a real Philippine picnic.

Launching of the *Migrationsbus* Project



Ambassador Rora Navarro Tolentino (center), Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey (right) and Ms. Vivian Kiefer-Vargas, President of *Maharlika Switzerland Basel* (MSB), BANAAG Presidential Awardee in 2002, appreciating the Philippine songs and dances performed by members of MSB at the Bundesplatz in Berne.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino joined the launching ceremonies of the *Migrationsbus* project at the Swiss Federal Palace Square on 16 August 2005. A small bus was sent off to travel for the next 2 years to 40 places in Switzerland on an informational tour. Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey was the Guest Speaker at the launching, which was attended by ten other Ambassadors. In her speech, she acknowledged the contribution of migrants to the economic and social advancement of Switzerland. Around 20% or about 1.5 million foreigners from 190 countries presently live in Switzerland, over half of whom were born or have lived in the country for more than 10 years.

PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS

Embassy farewells Mrs. Marie Manglo-Simmons



Mrs. Maria Manglo-Simmons, Attaché and Administrative and Cultural Officer, completed her tour of duty in Berne upon her recall to the Home Office on 26 October. In a farewell luncheon hosted for her on 24 October, Ambassador Tolentino cited her dedication and dependability which made her a valuable member of the Embassy team. Mrs. Simmons is now assigned at the Office of Consular Affairs, DFA, Manila.

Embassy welcomes Ms. Flora Belinda B. Bacosa

The Embassy welcomes **Ms. Flora Belinda B. Bacosa** as Mrs. Simmon's replacement. She arrived in Berne on 30 November 2005. She was previously assigned as Officer-In-Charge of the DFA Regional Consular Office in Tacloban City. She was posted before in Vientiane, Laos, Madrid and Buenos Aires. Ms. Bacosa, who speaks fluent Spanish and enjoys the kinetic arts, will be responsible for the Embassy's cultural promotion program and the coordination of activities involving the Filipino community in Switzerland. ☘

