



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Information Bulletin is published by

The Philippine Embassy
Kirchenfeldstrasse 73-75
CH-3005 Berne, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 (31) 350 1717
Fax: +41 (31) 352 2602
Email: berne_pe@bluewin.ch

Embassy promotes IT and BPO Services

Philippine IT Services and BPO Mission set to visit Switzerland in September 2004



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (seated in the middle) poses with her guests at the lunch she hosted at her Residence in appreciation of the successful business mission to Manila. Mr. *Andreas Hauri*, President of SSEACC, Dr. *Samimi Eidenbenz*, Honorary Consul General *Andreas Vogel*, Mr. *Dieter Baumann* of Convison, Ltd., Mr. *Fabian Gull* of Basler Zeitung, Mr. *Herbert K. Wight* of Zürcher Kantonalbank (all standing from left); and Mr. *Rolf M. Noll* (seated rightmost) of OSEC Business Network were part of the business team that visited the Philippines. Also in the picture are (seated from left) Trade Representative *Johannes Bernabe*, Minister and Consul General *Marilyn J. Alarilla*, Ms. *Barbara Möckli-Schneider* of SSEACC; (standing from right) Second Secretary and Consul *Mardomel Celso D. Melicor* and Senior Trade Representative *J. Antonio Buencamino*.

With the success of the Swiss Economic Mission and Business Delegation to the Philippines on 8-12 November 2003, a Return Mission to Switzerland focusing on Information Technology (IT) Services and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is scheduled on 23-24 September 2004. The Delegation will be composed of high ranking officials from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Board of Investments (BOI), the Philippines-Swiss Business Council (PSBC) and major IT companies in the Philippines.

Background

Swiss Economic and Business Delegation to the Philippines

The Philippine Embassy, in cooperation with the Swiss-South East Asian Chamber of Commerce (SSEACC), the Swiss Embassy in Manila and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce (PCCI) coordinated the visit of the 15-member Swiss Economic and Business Delegation that visited the Philippines in November 2003. The Delegation was headed by Ambassador Jörg Al. Reding, Head of the Division on Country Policies of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco) of the Swiss Federal Department of Economy.

Philippine IT Services and BPO Mission to Switzerland

The Philippine Embassy organized the Post-Mission Meeting with the SSEACC officials and participants of the Swiss Economic and Business Delegation to the Philippines which concluded that the proposed Return Mission to Switzerland should focus on IT Services and BPO. The Meeting likewise agreed that prior to the sending of the Mission, a preparatory study needs to be done in order to identify target Swiss companies and their BPO requirements. The Philippine Embassy requested the assistance of Mr. Joel Arida, a Filipino who is a Senior Consultant/Partner of IBR AG, a Project Management and Consulting Company in Basel. Mr. Arida is an Electrical Engineer from the University

of the Philippines and a holder of an Executive MBA from the International Institute for Management and Development (IMD) in Lausanne. Before joining IBR AG as a partner, he had worked at the Bank of the Philippine Islands, Du Pont de Nemours SA, Ascom Telematic, and at F. Hoffmann-La Roche. He has likewise managed numerous international and business-critical projects for various companies and industries.

IBR AG was founded in 1992 with the mission to serve its customers through excellence in project and information management. It is composed of highly qualified professionals combining years of experience in various business fields with in-depth IT knowledge. Since its foundation, it has been serving a growing number of international customers which includes among others, Novartis, UBS, Roche, Credit Swiss and Unique Airport.

Mr. Arida together with his colleague Dr. Thomas Blaser, Business Development Manager, IBR AG, agreed to do the market study as goodwill and service to the Embassy. On 10 March 2004, a meeting was held at the Embassy with Mr. Arida and Dr. Blaser to discuss the proposed Mission. Discussions focused on the preparatory stage of the project, activities and dates of the Mission. IBR AG submitted a Mission Work Plan during the meeting indicating a timetable on specific activities to be done during the preparatory period.

Preparatory Stage of the Philippine Return Mission

In Switzerland

The Philippine Embassy sent letters to the first twenty (20) major Swiss companies in Switzerland informing them about the Mission. The list of companies which was provided by IBR AG was drawn from major sectors of the Swiss economy such as energy; drug and health care; financial services; insurance; transport; consumer retail industry; and telecommunication. A Fact Sheet on Philippine BPO capabilities has been prepared and can be accessed at http://mypage.bluewin.ch/berne_pe/FactSheet.pdf. The activities of the Mission include a Roundtable Discussion as well as individual meetings with Swiss companies.

In the Philippines

The DTI-BOI, the PSBC, the PCCI, the DFA and the Swiss Embassy in Manila are the coordinating agencies of the Mission. Major IT Industry Associations which include Philippine Software Industry Association (PSIA), Outsource Philippines Inc., Digital Philippines, Information Technology Association of the Philippines (ITAP) and Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines (ITFP) are being tapped to join the Mission. The DTI-BOI is finalizing this Mission that includes other European countries – The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

Links to Information Technology Services in the Philippines

With the Philippines' enormous potential in the IT/BPO services, the Philippine Government continues to take measures to promote IT business development in the country. On 12 January 2004, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Executive Order No. 269 creating the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) and appointed Secretary Virgilio Peña as Chairman of the Commission.

The Commission is the policy making, planning, coordinating, implementing, regulating and administrative entity of the executive branch of the Government that will promote, develop and regulate integrated and strategic ICT systems and reliable and cost-efficient communication facilities and services. It is an interim organization until the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) is created. The creation of the DICT is presently under consideration by the Philippine Congress.

The Philippines is very competitive in the IT Business outsourcing and IT-enable services with priority areas in BPO, Contact Centers, Software Development, Animation Services and Medical Transcription. With its strategic business location, strong workforce, English language facility and business incentives, the country can be considered as e-services hub in Asia. The BPOs doing business in the Philippines include the following: Accenture; Alcatel; Alitalia; America Online (AOL); Barnes and Noble; Caltex Shared Service Center; Hewlett Packard; HSBC; International Red Cross; Maersk Administrative Center; Philips; Procter and Gamble; SGS; Shell Shared Services; Siemens; and Temic Telefunken.

The following are useful website links for detailed information on the IT/BPO Services in the Philippines: www.boi.gov.ph; www.outsourcephilippines.org; www.digitalphilippines.org; and www.philippinebusiness.com.ph.

Ambassador Tolentino visits ABB Switzerland, Ltd.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino paid a call on the management of Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) Switzerland Ltd. on 18 February 2004. The Ambassador, accompanied by Minister and Consul General Marilyn J. Alarilla and Second Secretary and Consul Mardomelo Celo D. Melicor, met with Dr. Ing. **Richard A. Friedl** and Mr. **Kurt van Schellenbeck**, Senior Vice President and Vice-President, respectively of ABB Switzerland Ltd. at the company's headquarters in Baden. This call was a follow up on the Swiss Economic Mission to the Philippines which Dr. Friedl joined in November 2003.

The ABB officials briefed the Ambassador on the operations of their company and presented an overview of the company's present activities and thrusts. The Ambassador discussed with them some areas of mutual concern like the exchange of technical trainees and the Philippines' outsourcing potential, and solicited from them their candid comments on the aforementioned Swiss Business Mission to Manila, particularly their views on how to make effective follow-up activities.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino and Minister and Consul General Marilyn J. Alarilla (right) are received with an apero and lunch by Senior Vice President Dr. Ing. Richard A. Friedl (center) and Vice President Kurt van Schellenbeck (left) of ABB Switzerland, Ltd. at the Villa Boveri in Baden.

The Ambassador and her party were treated by Dr. Friedl and Mr. van Schellenbeck to a lunch at the charming Villa Boveri, the former family residence of the company's founder, Mr. Walter Boveri, which is a landmark of Baden and placed under monument protection since 1976. The restored villa and the surrounding park with its winter garden and concert hall are used for festive occasions by the city of Baden or private entities to receive guests or hold congresses, seminars or concerts.

Embassy conducts first overseas elections



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino (right) looks on as Minister and Consul General Marilyn J. Alarilla (left) pores over the election results to double check all entries after the counting of votes at the Embassy's reception area on 10 May 2004. Also observing the election procedure is First Secretary and Consul Frank R. Cimafranca (center) from Geneva, Chairman of the Special Board of Canvassers for Switzerland.

The Embassy successfully conducted the first overseas absentee voting for the Philippine national elections on 10 May 2004. All qualified voters with approved applications to vote in Berne could personally vote at the Embassy from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for 30 days, from 11 April to 10 May 2004, including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Voting closed at 9 a.m. of 10 May 2004 for synchronized counting based on Philippine time. The counting at the Embassy's reception area was immediately commenced by Minister and Consul General Marilyn J. Alarilla, Chairperson of the Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI). Extensive preparations, several mock election and counting practice runs, and the full team cooperation of the entire Embassy staff at Berne made it possible to complete counting procedures by 3 p.m.

Single canvassing for Switzerland

The election returns for Berne as well as the election returns for Geneva were canvassed at the Embassy by a Special Board of Canvassers led by its Chairman, First Secretary and Consul Frank R. Cimafranca from the Philippine Mission in Geneva. The canvassing was completed the next day, 11 May 2004, and the election results for Switzerland were handcarried by Consul Cimafranca, who left Zurich for Manila that same evening to personally deliver the results to Congress and the COMELEC as required by law.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino briefs Secretary of Foreign Affairs Delia D. Albert on 15 March 2004 in Geneva on the state of the Embassy's preparations for overseas absentee voting as well as on significant developments in RP-Swiss bilateral political, economic, social and cultural relations and on the on-going projects and initiatives of the Embassy. Secretary Albert was in Geneva from 15 to 17 March 2004 to attend the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

UST Singers win in Swiss choral festival

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) Singers visited Switzerland to participate in the 2004 Montreux Choral Festival held in Montreux, Switzerland from 14 to 21 April 2004. In this competition, the UST Singers garnered the prestigious *excellent avec distinction* prize and the *Prix de la Ville de Vevey* (City of Vevey Award). The group likewise performed in the Canton of Fribourg before the competition proper in Montreux.

Manila Vocal Ensemble holds successful benefit concert

The Manila Vocal Ensemble, which has been visiting and performing in various parts of Switzerland since 1988, was featured in a benefit concert at St. Paul's Parish Church Hall in Biel-Bienne on 24 April 2004 for **Erika L. Sudaria**. Erika is a young Filipino child who came to visit Switzerland with her mother and was diagnosed with leukemia two months after her arrival in Switzerland. She underwent chemotherapy at Inselspital, the university hospital in Berne. The proceeds of the concert will be used for Erika's medical expenses at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang, Muntinlupa City when she returns to the Philippines next year. Those who wish to help Erika may contact the Samahang Pilipina Biel-Bienne by telephone at +41 (79) 612 4907 or by e-mail at tschanz-lusande@bluewin.ch for more details.



Erika L. Sudaria needs to continue her chemotherapy treatment in the Philippines.

Embassy observes Flag Day



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino leads the Embassy's officers and staff in celebrating the National Flag Day with a flag raising ceremony on 28 May 2004.

The Embassy observed National Flag Day on 28 May 2004 with a simple but solemn flag raising ceremony before the start of office hours in the Embassy grounds. Following the singing of the National Anthem and the *Panunumpa sa Watawat*, Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino delivered her brief remarks outlining the history and development of the Philippine flag, elaborating its significance as a national symbol, and encouraging the proper use and handling of the country's emblem.

INAUGURAL SPEECH

OF

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Quirino Grandstand, Rizal Park, Manila

June 30, 2004

(Passages in italics were delivered in Pilipino.)

Thank you, Secretary Romulo, Vice President-elect and Mrs. Noli de Castro, former President Fidel Ramos, Senate President and Mrs. Drilon and the members of the Senate, Speaker and Mrs. De Venecia and the members of the House of Representatives, Chief Justice and Mrs. Davide, and the Associate Justices and other members of the Judiciary, Excellencies to Special Envoys and members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Cabinet and their ladies, other appointive officials, mayors of Metropolitan Manila, governors and other local officials, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and its men and women, as well as those of the police, members of the various sectors of society, fellow workers in government, *mga minamahal kong kababayan:*

Long live the Filipino nation!

My sincerest thanks to all of my beloved countrymen, to our democracy, to God Almighty.

This ceremony never fails to impress. It invests the highest official of the land with the chief care of the nation, and the principal responsibility of leaving it better than when she took it in hand.

Let me speak plainly.

When I step down six years from now this will be my 10-point legacy.

I shall have created more than six million jobs, perhaps, even ten million jobs. I shall have supported three million entrepreneurs by giving them loans and helping them become good managers. That way, we shall be establishing a deep foundation for a broad middle class.

I shall have developed one million hectares, if possible two million, of agribusiness land by making them productive and transporting their products to the markets efficiently.

Everyone of school age will be in school in an uncrowded classroom, in surroundings conducive to learning.

I shall have balanced the budget by collecting the right revenues and spending on the right things.

The network of transport and digital infrastructure on which my government embarked in the last three years will have linked the entire country.

Power and water will be regularly provided to all barangays.

Metro Manila will be decongested, with economic activity

growing and spreading to new centers of government, business and community in Luzon, in the Visayas and in Mindanao.

The Subic-Clark corridor will be the most competitive international service and logistic center in the Southeast Asian region.

Elections will no longer raise a single doubt about their integrity. The electoral process will be completely computerized. *Enough of the manual counting of votes.*

And long before that, peace will have come to Mindanao. All insurgents shall have turned their swords into plowshares. They will have become so absorbed into one society that the struggles of the past will be just the stuff of legend.

The divisive issues generated by EDSA 1, 2 and 3 will also be just memories shared by friends from every side in those upheavals. Only the lessons of unity, courage and a just closure kept alive in their hearts.

We must end with justice the conflict brought about by EDSA 1, 2 and 3. There are more things that bind rather than tear us apart as a nation. We are a vibrant country with a lively democracy and fervor burning in our hearts. Industry, patience, fear of God and love for family are common values we hold dear.

The Filipino is known worldwide for his honesty, honor and dignity. We fight for what we believe in.

The last election clearly saw this fighting Filipino

spirit at its best. Roco, Lacson, Villanueva and Poe all fought with conviction.

If only we could now fight together, with the same energy and conviction, to preserve our freedoms and advance our nation's progress.

We know now what we can do when we set our minds to it. We know now how well we can unite the people around our respective causes. Can we not work together to rally the nation behind the paramount objective of its salvation?

To win and realize our dream, we must all unite. We must come together by tearing down the barriers of social division and building up economic opportunity for the poor and establishing justice for all. This is the foundation of genuine unity.

Our unity as a people will be defined by a strong vision of a nation built on common values of hard work, shared sacrifice and love of country.

The unity we seek is not one of conformity but unwavering respect for the rules and institutions of democracy. A modern country founded on social justice, enjoying economic prosperity.

To achieve a united country, we need to face the deep divisions of our nation squarely, not only the truth but also the solution.



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo delivers her inaugural speech as the 14th President of the Republic of the Philippines in simple but dignified ceremonies on 30 June 2004 at the Quirino Grandstand, Luneta Park, Manila. She spelled out her 10-point program which she said will be her legacy to the Filipino when she steps down after her six-year term.

That solution must engage all segments of society in a new government of political reform and economic change.

Our nation must embrace a vision of economic opportunity, social cohesion and, always and ever, democratic faith. I offer my hand and I hope it will be taken with the same faith.

Unity is not measured by how many political parties are able to achieve the accommodation of narrow self-interests. Rather, it is achieved by the harmony of sincere convictions based on our agreement on the basic requirements for achieving the national good.

We are not merely a group of islands surrounded by water but a country linked by the sea and unified by a rich heritage. We are not an archipelago of false hopes but a nation joined together by the progress we seek.

Our ability to unify will be judged by our ability to come together under a common vision that will erase the divisions that hold us back as a nation.

The government must make tough choices, but this I promise: they will be tougher on those who have it easy than on those who have it tough already. In this way alone lies unity and not exploitation and division. *We must include in our national goals the hopes and dreams of our poorest citizens in order for us to succeed.*

It is immoral for the rich and powerful to keep taking more and more, leaving the poor with less and less.

It is immoral for the government to grow unresponsive, even corrupt, while leaving the poor without health care, without shelter, without clean water.

It is immoral for the foes of democracy to terrorize our children, paralyze our economy and jeopardize our future as the poorest among us bear the heaviest burden.

Therefore, I come to you today with a mandate from the people to unite the nation and fight for change. I come to you today with a mandate to govern by the clear call of the sovereign people.

I pledge to bring you a pro-poor agenda that will lift up our poorest brothers and sisters, invest them with dignity and imbue them with hope.

I pledge to you a government that will live within its means and put every spare peso to real work. I pledge to reduce spending where government does not work and increase spending where a government can make a difference for better.

And while I am doing that, I will crack down on wasteful and abusive officials and influence peddlers.

I pledge to collect taxes mandated by law even as I stop extortion masquerading as tax collection. Pay your taxes; do not pretend to be innocent when you are caught. I will crack down on tax cheats.

And I pledge to do everything necessary to expand the economy, engage it deeper in the world of commerce and advance the interests of our country and our people the world over.

But for me to do all these, I need you. I cannot do these alone.

I will need every single Filipino to come together, get involved and help us bind the wounds of the past. I will need every single Filipino to get our nation healthy for tomorrow.

I challenge our business community to rise to the occasion and embrace selfless nationalism.

Invest in our people and our country instead of giving excuses for keeping your money abroad where it cannot put our people to work.

I challenge our young men and women: there is a role to play in the re-creation of our nation, some in honest public service, most in productive private endeavor. Whatever it is you decide to do, let the greater part of it be for our country. It is personal patriotism, not impersonal free markets, that makes nations strong and great.

I look up to Congress to seize this moment in history. Its like it will not come again. All eyes are on us. You have it within your power to transform the nation with laws. Laws that modernize our banking, laws that reform our bureaucracy, laws that strengthen the independence and honesty of our judges, laws that invest in our country and secure to our people the promised blessings of democracy, which are a life worth living, liberty worth having,

happiness within everyone's grasp.

Now, is our time to march forward as one. I seek your wisdom and I trust in your commitment

to the common good, to the swift actions you will take.

And finally, I challenge myself and our government to live up to the highest standards of honesty and competence in the public service.

Everyday, I shall get up and work for you. I shall make good and I shall do good for the good of all and not just for the cameras. *The canvassing for public attention is over.*

I expect you to get up everyday to hold me accountable, in the full glare of transparent leadership. I shall wield the power of the Presidency to uphold truth and justice.

I devote my life and treasure to serving your mandate. Do your responsibility and I shall do mine.

United, how can we lose? Together, we will prevail!

We will strive together. We will triumph together. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is sworn into office by Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr. at the Cebu Provincial Capitol in Cebu City on 30 June 2004. With her are First Gentleman Atty. Jose Miguel Arroyo and members of her family.

Filipino major trains on chemical warfare

In line with its campaign against terrorism, the Philippines sent Chief Inspector **Jose S. Embang, Jr.**, Chief of the Special Rescue Unit of the Bureau of Fire Protection to attend the Swiss Emergency Field Advance Training (SEF TRAD II) Course from 19 to 23 April 2004 at the Swiss Armed Forces NBC Defense Training Center in Spiez, Switzerland.

The five-day course was designed to train the 32 participants in responding to chemical weapons attacks. All participants except Chief Inspector Embang were previous trainees at Spiez. However, his previous trainings on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the United States qualified him to participate in the said advanced training.

The Special Rescue Unit headed by Chief Inspector Embang was created by the Bureau of Fire Protection in 1998 to respond to rescue related emergencies and disasters. The unit saw action in disasters like the Cherry Hills landslide, the Payatas thrash slide, the ABS-CBN tower high-angle rescue operation, the Bangko Sentral fire incident, and lately, the Super Ferry 14 sea tragedy.

While in Switzerland, Chief Inspector Embang took time to make a courtesy call on Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino in Berne. He apprised the Ambassador and Minister and Consul General Marilyn J. Alarilla on the Philippines' preparedness to WMD attacks, and discussed issues on terrorism and the Philippines-Switzerland bilateral agreement on assistance during disasters or emergencies.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino poses with Ms. Monika Baumann, President of *Theresa Lädeli*, a 2000 Banaag Presidential Awardee for Organizations Overseas, during its 12th anniversary celebration on 25 June 2004 at the Jegenstorf churchyard. Ms. Baumann and her women volunteers in and around Jegenstorf collect and sell antique jewelry and sundry items to support their humanitarian projects among the marginalized sectors in Southern Mindanao.

Anti-Money Laundering Officials attend seminar in Berne

Three top-ranking Philippine anti-money laundering officials attended a seminar organized by the Swiss government for the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia from 22 to 25 March 2004. Executive Director **Vicente S. Aquino** of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), Chief State Prosecutor **Jovencito R. Zuño** from the Department of Justice and Assistant Ombudsman **Melchor Arthur H. Carandang**, Officer in Charge of the Fact-Finding, Intelligence and Research Office of the Ombudsman, were the Philippine delegates to this special seminar in Berne. Organized by the Swiss government to acquaint the higher officials from these Southeast Asian countries with the latest developments in Switzerland, the seminar presented the Swiss anti-money laundering system, including related aspects in police and law enforcement, organized crime, terrorism financing, reporting system, judicial cooperation and intelligence coordination. Key federal government officials were chosen to lecture on these subjects.

From Berne, they proceeded to Zurich on 25 March 2004 for a continuation of the lectures on how an actual Swiss bank, the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS), is complying with Swiss anti-money laundering regulations.

Money laundering is the processing of criminal proceeds in order to disguise or conceal their illegal origin. It was first criminalized in the mid-80s by the United States and other major economic powers. In the Philippines, the laundering of dirty money became a crime only starting 17 October 2001, when Republic Act No. 9160, otherwise known as the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 (AMLA) became effective.

Four Filipino Journalists visit Switzerland

A group of journalists from Southeast Asia visited Switzerland in late January 2004 under the sponsorship of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Among them were four Filipino journalists, namely, **Carol Arguillas** of *MindaNews*, **Jose Galang** of *Today*, **Roel Landingin** of *The Financial Times* and **Marites Danguilan Vitug** of *Newsbreak*. The visit made them overcome their stereotype image of Switzerland as a tiny land of watches, chocolates, white mountains and dirty money, and helped them appreciate deeper the Swiss banking system, the Swiss style of democracy, Swiss humanitarian and neutral foreign policy, the people's value for historical and environmental conservation, and their constant striving for technical precision and order. A highlight of their trip was a short visit to the alpine resort town of Davos to attend sessions of this year's World Economic Forum (WEF).

Rules on Dual Citizenship Law in place

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the *Citizenship Retention and Re-Acquisition Act of 2003* (R.A. No. 9225) were released by the Bureau of Immigration on 10 March 2004, paving the way for the implementation of this important legislation, also known popularly as the dual citizenship law. Under the aforementioned law, *natural born* Filipinos who lost their Philippine citizenship by naturalization in a foreign country may re-acquire their Philippine citizenship by swearing allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines in an oath-taking ceremony. The most important documentary requirement is the applicant's NSO Birth Certificate issued by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Manila (for applicants born in the Philippines), or the original Report of Birth (for those born abroad). Interested parties who wish to avail themselves of this privilege are advised to visit the Embassy's site (http://mypage.bluewin.ch/berne_pe/DualCit.htm) for more detailed requirements and downloadable application forms.

Only natural born former Filipinos

The Embassy has received several inquiries on whether the spouses of Filipino wives can now acquire Filipino citizenship under the dual citizenship law. Only those who were Filipinos from birth can enjoy this privilege. The alien husbands of Filipino wives are not natural born Filipinos and therefore cannot acquire Philippine citizenship under this law. However, they can seek to be naturalized in the Philippines under the usual naturalization procedure, but this entails giving up their foreign citizenship.

Dependent children included

Children of persons who re-acquire Philippine citizenship under R.A. No. 9225 automatically re-acquire Philippine citizenship with their parents as well. According to the implementing rules, the applicant's unmarried dependent children below 18 automatically re-acquire Filipino citizenship with the parent applicant if the parent declares the dependent children's names in the petition.

Joint Celebration of the 106th Anniversary of Philippine Independence by the Philippine Embassy and the Filipino Community in Switzerland



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino delivering the welcome address during the joint celebration of the 106th Anniversary of Philippine Independence by the Filipino Community in Switzerland and the Philippine Embassy on 12 June 2004 at the Mehrzweckhalle Bach in Uetendorf.

The Embassy celebrated jointly with the Filipino Community in Switzerland the 106th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence at the Mehrzweckhalle Bach in Uetendorf (Thun) on 12 June 2004.

To ensure the success of the event, the Filipino community organizations began preparing for this activity as early as September 2003. The Embassy hosted and chaired seven (7) preparatory meetings and organized 11 Committees and 2 Sub-Committees.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino leads Embassy officials and the Filipino community leaders in regular meetings in preparation for the joint celebration of the 106th Anniversary of Philippine Independence. This file photo shows them in Filipiniana attire after the preparatory meeting on 17 April 2004.

The celebration started at 11 a.m. with a Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Guy C. Pineda from Lausanne, who was assisted by the religious sisters of the Workers for Christ the Worker (WCW) from Fribourg. The music ministry of the El Shaddai Zurich Chapter provided the music during the Holy Mass.

At lunch, Filipino food was served in 15 food stalls scattered in the covered veranda leading to the entrance of the venue. *Lechon, dinuguan, menudo, palabok, pansit, ginataang gabi, lumpia, inihaw* and a wide variety of Filipino desserts such as halo-halo, suman sa dahon, banaba fritter, leche flan, rice cakes and many others were offered at reasonable prices. The Kilosbayan Concert was shown in a big screen while the guests were having lunch inside the hall. The audience was impressed with the presentation of that Concert, and many community leaders expressed their interest to obtain copies of

the video film for showing during cultural events in Swiss schools and in their respective communities. Another videotape on Philippine popular tourist destinations was likewise shown.

A Cultural Program was presented at 2 p.m., starting with the singing of the *Pambansang Awit*. Regional songs and dances, a parade of Filipino costumes, modern songs and dances made up the three parts of the program.



Samahang Pilipino (SP) Berne's number in the afternoon cultural program featuring the popular *Itik-Itik* dance, here performed by the young Swiss-Filipino children of its members, was well-loved by the audience, not only for their colorful costumes, but also for their excellent dancing.

In her welcome address, Ambassador Rora Navarro Tolentino highlighted the theme of the celebration, *Galing ng Pilipino, sa Matatag na Republika*, emphasizing the multi-faceted talent of Filipinos wherever they may be, and acknowledging their valuable contributions as active partners in promoting the well-being of their compatriots back home.

Classroom and Water Well Projects

Ambassador Tolentino mentioned specifically the donations made by the Filipino Community in Switzerland of one classroom in the Dalipe Elementary School in M'lang, North Cotabato under the Classroom Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad project of the Department of Labor and Employment, and two water well projects in Ragay, Camarines Sur and in Hindang, Leyte. She announced that the donations to these projects, which amounted to CHF 7,598.00 (around US\$ 6,350.00), were raised by the Filipino Community in Switzerland from funds from past joint Independence Day celebrations since the year 2000.



Ms. Gloria Mundanza, Division Superintendent of Schools (2nd from the left) and Mr. Sinamar Ibañez (right), Principal of the Dalipe Elementary School in M'lang, North Cotabato during the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a new classroom donated by the Filipino Community of Switzerland (Photo from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas).



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino expressing her best wishes to Swiss Confederation President and Federal Councillor Joseph Deiss during the New Year's Reception at the Federal Palace in Berne on 12 January 2004.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino poses with Ms. Regine Velasquez after the latter's concert before an enthusiastic Swiss-Filipino audience at the Kongresshaus Zurich on 29 February 2004.



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino with some Asian Pacific Group (ASPAG) Ambassadors during their visit on 03 June 2004 to KompoGas AG in Glattbrugg for a company tour and demonstration of the environment-friendly technology of converting compost and other household wastes into energy.

Maharlika Basel launches German Language Course

Maharlika Switzerland Basel (MSB), a Filipino community organization that received the Banaag Presidential Award in 2002, launched a German language course in Basel on 17 May 2004 for the benefit of its members and other foreign migrants. This was the third German language course offered by MSB through the assistance of the Christoph Merian Foundation after the ones organized for beginners and advanced speakers in 1999 and 2001, respectively.

At the launching, Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino praised MSB President Ms. Vivian Kiefer-Vargas for her vision and active commitment to assist and integrate Filipinos in Switzerland as well as her willingness to help her countrymen through MSB's various projects in the Philippines.

Personnel Movements

Recall of Mr. Añonuevo to Manila and Arrival of Mr. Atienza in Berne



Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino presents a souvenir gift to Mr. Apolonio A. Añonuevo at the farewell lunch in his honor on 09 February 2004, with his family and the Embassy staff witnessing the presentation.

At the end of his tour of duty, Mr. **Apolonio A. Añonuevo**, Attaché and Property Officer, was recalled back to the Home Office on 13 February 2004 with his wife Beth and children. The Embassy honored him on 09 February 2004 for his six and one-half years of dedicated service to the Embassy with a farewell lunch, during which Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino cited his dependability and good-natured attitude towards his assigned tasks. A souvenir gift from the Embassy family was presented to him during the occasion. He is now assigned at the DFA Regional Consular Office in Legazpi City.

The Embassy welcomes Mr. Añonuevo's replacement in the person of Mr. **Ruben C. Atienza**. He arrived in Berne with his wife Evelyn and two children on 27 January 2004. In addition to his duties as Attaché supervising the Consular Section, Mr. Atienza is the Embassy's Property Officer as well as officer in charge of assistance to nationals (ATN) cases. Berne is his second foreign post. He brings with him a wealth of experience from his previous assignment in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and his stint at the Office of Consular Affairs in the Home Office. Mr. Atienza hails from Taal, Batangas and has four daughters.



Attaché Ruben C. Atienza