



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Official Cantonal Visit of the Embassy to the Canton of Uri



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (center) and her delegation are welcomed at the Rathausplatz (Town Hall Square) in Aldorf by the Governing Council of Canton Uri led by Governing Council President *Josef Arnold* (fourth from right) during her Official Cantonal Visit on 31 May 2005. Behind them is the famous Swiss National William Tell Monument, executed in 1895 by the Swiss sculptor Richard Kissling. Seventeen years later, the same sculptor executed the Rizal Monument in 1912.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino made an official cantonal visit to the Canton of Uri on 31 May 2005. She and her delegation were received at the Cantonal Capital of Aldorf by the full Uri Governing Council composed of President *Josef Arnold*, Vice President *Markus Stadler*, State Councillors *Heidi Z'graggen*, *Markus Züst*, *Stefan Fryberg*, *Josef Dittli* and *Isidor Baumann*, as well as Chancellor Dr. *Peter Huber*.

Conducted to further deepen the cordial relations between the Philippines and Switzerland at the cantonal level, the visit provided an opportunity for Ambassador Tolentino to personally meet the high-

est officials of the canton and to brief them on the Embassy's projects and initiatives to promote tourism, trade, IT services and business processes outsourcing, and cultural and other exchanges between the Philippines and Switzerland.

It is interesting to note that the national monuments of both countries were made in Uri by one and the same sculptor, Richard Kissling. He used Gotthard granite coming from the Reiswald quarry in Wassen, Uri for the Rizal Monument. Upon its completion in September 1912, the Rizal Monument was briefly exhibited in Wassen before it was finally shipped to Manila.

Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey honored by Lady Ambassadors at Luncheon



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (fifth from left) and seven other Lady Ambassadors accredited in Berne hosted an official luncheon in honor of Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister *Micheline Calmy-Rey* (center) at the Bellevue Palace Hotel in Berne on 10 May 2005. Ambassador Tolentino delivered the welcome remarks as the most senior host Ambassador. Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey presented to them Switzerland's views on the UN Human Rights Council and on other related issues.

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Embassy attends Liechtenstein Informative Meeting



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (inset) and 75 other Ambassadors pose with Prime Minister *Otmar Hasler*, Deputy Prime Minister *Dr. Klaus Tschütscher*, Foreign Minister *Rita Kieber-Beck* and Minister of Home Affairs *Dr. Martin Meyer* (fifth to eighth from left, bottom row) during the annual Informative Meeting for Ambassadors held on 09 May 2005 in the Gemeindsaal of Gamprin, Liechtenstein.

Embassy visits NTB Buchs in St. Gallen



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* is received by Prof. *Klaus Wellerdieck* (left) and Prof. *Horst Hodel* (right), Rector and Head of International Relations, respectively, of the University of Applied Sciences NTB in Buchs, St. Gallen on 11 January 2005. The Embassy attended a presentation of the Swiss engineering education system and of the NTB in particular, to explore possible academic exchanges between NTB and engineering schools in the Philippines. NTB is well-known as an excellence center for nanotechnology in Eastern Switzerland.

Independence Day Reception at Hotel Bellevue



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* and Mrs. *Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin*, President of the Swiss National Council (lower house), at the Hotel Bellevue Palace reception.

The Embassy hosted an official reception on 10 June 2005 at the Hotel Bellevue Palace in Berne in celebration of the 107th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence. Some 140 guests from the Federal, Cantonal and City governments, Swiss businessmen and members of the Diplomatic Corps attended the noontime reception that featured Filipino dishes and desserts. The Embassy holds an official reception at Bellevue every other year.

Filcom and Embassy Plan Joint Philippine Independence Day Celebration in Dietikon



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* with the Organizing Committee composed of the heads of the Filipino Community organizations in Switzerland, at the Embassy grounds on 30 April 2005. Six preparatory meetings were held prior to the well-attended joint June 12 celebration in Dietikon, near Zurich.

The Embassy again organized with the Filipino Community in Switzerland a joint Independence Day celebration at the *Stadthalle* in Dietikon on 12 June 2005. The whole day affair consisted of a mass in the morning officiated by three priests (two Filipino and one Swiss), a Filipino food sale at noon, an afternoon musical theater presentation, and a tombola raffle draw with three (3) round trip air tickets to the Philippines among the major prizes.

Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* highlighted the President's Independence Day Message and thanked the Filipino Community leaders, organizers and participants for the successfully organizing the affair. She informed the audience of the various activities of the Embassy during the past year, and introduced Minister and Consul General *Lamberto V. Monsanto* who had newly arrived Switzerland. More than 1300 persons attended the event.

SP Berner Oberland celebrates Valentine's Day



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (seated leftmost) with Minister and Consul General *Marilyn J. Alarilla* (standing leftmost) during the Valentine's Party of the Samahang Pilipina Berner Oberland (SPBEO) at Victoria Jungfrau Hotel on 14 February 2005. Mr. and Mrs. *Gian Franco Lautanio* (seated at the center), Director of Industrial Firms Interlaken, co-sponsored a water project in Irosin, Sorsogon with SPBEO. The Filipino band *The Asian Crew* played as guest band during the event.

Bishop Cantillas visits Switzerland



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (rightmost) and Minister and Consul General *Marilyn J. Alarilla* (second from the left) pose with Bishop *Precioso D. Cantillas*, SDB, DD of the Diocese of Maasin, Leyte on 06 March 2005. He is the CBCP's designated official for Migrant Concerns. Bishop Cantillas solicited donations for the Shrine to the First Mass and Holy Cross in Limasawa. Accompanying him was Ms. *Edita Teresa B. Tunay*, editor of the fortnightly CBCP Monitor.

The President's Independence Day Message



Malacañan Palace
Manila

My warmest greetings to the Filipino community on the occasion of the *107th Anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence*.

We in the Philippines are proud of your collective achievements and grateful for the numerous philanthropic acts you have extended to our countrymen.

As we celebrate our political freedom, I am gratified that the first phase of my economic reform agenda toward freedom from poverty is complete. It includes passage of revenue generating measures that will provide P80-100 billion in new annual revenue, administrative reforms to improve tax collections, a fiscally responsible national budget and the opening of the mining sector and the thousands of new jobs that it will represent.

And just recently, we announced a record for tax collection for the month of April that beat our own estimates, and for the first time in years, we achieved a budget surplus. Additionally, the economy is growing.

We have much to be thankful for, but this is no time to rest on our laurels. There is much to do.

So the second phase has begun. I will press forward by continuing aggressive economic and fiscal reforms. My focus will be to crack down on tax cheats, increase initiatives against graft and corruption, launch an energy conservation and energy independence campaign, and bring prices under control with consumer watch programs to insure no price gouging.

Most importantly, Phase Two will be defined by bringing the benefits of tough economic reforms to the people. With more revenue, we can invest more in the vital social needs to lift our poorest citizens out of poverty. I will invest in a pro poor agenda that includes job creation, better education, improved healthcare, electrification, roads, transportation and infrastructure, to name a few.

Let us stay united as Filipinos as we move ahead into the next phase of challenges and accomplishments.

(Sgd) **GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**

Manila, June 12, 2005

The Secretary's Independence Day Message



Department of Foreign Affairs
Manila

The Philippines stands taller, prouder and stronger on its 107th Independence Day. All Filipinos are privileged to take part and witness its commemoration.

Generations of heroes have made great sacrifices to make this day a reality and create a Filipino nation. Even before the struggles of Rizal, Mabini, Aguinaldo, Bonifacio and Del Pilar, native folk heroes rose against the colonizers to protest their oppression and denial of freedom.

Equally important, generations of common folk and plain citizens – professionals, teachers, farmers, overseas workers, fishermen, soldiers, housewives – daily performed acts of courage in quiet ways that strengthened their communities and their schools, strengthening the social bond, advancing national unity and raising civic pride.

There were great institutions that helped the nation advance – the presidency, the civil service, the legislature, the judiciary, the business community, the trade union movement, the Church, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and others that fostered democracy and strengthened the national good.

The period from 2001 to 2005 has been an exciting, challenging and fulfilling time – an important page in history. Under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's watch, our nation has made great advances in the economy, political life and social growth. The President's mission under her 10-Point Development Program is to lead the nation to greater peace and prosperity.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is proud to have carried out President Macapagal Arroyo's foreign policy and to have advanced our national interest abroad. In the past months and years, we have become a leading voice in the Security Council of the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the UN family of world organizations.

The Philippines is proud to have played a leading role in the global war on terrorism and to become a voice for developing countries on the theme of poverty and development. The Department of Foreign Affairs, together with the Department of Labor and Employment, assiduously promotes the protection of our overseas workers. Our embassies and consulates abroad are a sanctuary for workers in distress. Our diplomats are experts not only in foreign relations but also in worker protection.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is pleased to participate in the commemoration of our Freedom Day. On this day, we rededicate ourselves to the cause of our Founding Fathers and the values they stand for.

(Sgd) **ALBERTO G. ROMULO**

Manila, 12 June 2005

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
 MANILA

**NOTICE OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTION
 TO ALL FILIPINO CITIZENS**

All citizens of the Philippines abroad, not otherwise disqualified by law, at least eighteen (18) years of age on the day of the election, and who wish to vote for Senators and Party-List Representatives for purposes of the **May 14, 2007 National Elections** must file applications for registration/certification as overseas absentee voters **from October 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006.**

The voting period will be from **April 14, 2007 until 3:00 p.m., Philippine time of May 14, 2007.**

For details, contact the Embassy/Consulate nearest your residence or visit the following websites:

DFA-Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat (Manila):
www.dfa.gov.ph Hotlines: +63 (2) 833 0914, 832 8363,
 832 9726 and 833 0686

COMELEC-COAV (Manila):
www.comelec.gov.ph Hotlines: +63 (2) 522 2251,
 521 2952,

Ambassador Tolentino addresses the Manila Swiss Club



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* addressing the Swiss Club of the Philippines at Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati City on 20 April 2005.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino was invited as guest of honor by the Swiss Club of the Philippines on the occasion of its 98th foundation anniversary in Manila on 20 April 2005.

Founded in 1907, the Swiss Club is considered one of the most important associations organized by the Swiss community in the Philippines. In 2003, it had a total of 156 registered members.

Tracing back the official relations established between Switzerland and the Philippines to the middle of the 19th century, Ambassador Tolentino praised the Swiss Club for contributing towards strengthening Swiss-Philippine ties through the years.

She cited the activities, projects and accomplishments of the Embassy as demonstrative of the dynamic and vibrant bilateral relations between both countries. Wishing the Swiss Club success, she hoped that its members would continue to project a convincing and positive image of the Philippines abroad.

Roland S. Payog first technical trainee in Switzerland



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* and Minister and Consul General *Lamberto V. Monsanto* pose with Mr. *Roland Payog* (wearing a cap) during his courtesy call on the Ambassador. With him are Mr. *Stefan Mattle* and Mr. *Franco Larcher* (rightmost), Vice President and Chief Finance Officer of APM Technica AG.

Ambassador Rora Navarro-Tolentino welcomed Mr. *Roland S. Payog* as the first Filipino to train in Switzerland under the *Agreement on the Exchange of Young Professionals and Technical Trainees between the Philippines and Switzerland* during his call on the Ambassador on 02 June 2005. Accompanying Mr. Payog were Mr. *Stefan Mattle* and Mr. *Franco Larcher*, Vice President and Chief Finance Officer, respectively, of APM Technica AG, where Mr. Payog will be working and training. He is an electronics and communications engineering graduate from the Wesleyan University-Philippines in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

APM Technica AG is a high technology company in the field of instrumentation specializing in the branches of optic, fine mechanics and electronics based in Herrbrug, St. Gallen.

During the call, Messrs. Mattle and Larcher informed the Ambassador of the company's plan to expand to Asia and set up a regional headquarters in the Philippines. The Ambassador assured them of the Embassy's full support for their expansion plans. The Embassy arranged meetings with them and officials of the Department of Trade and Industry-Board of Investments (DTI-BOI) in Manila in July 2005, including site visits to Industrial Estates in the suburbs.

The RP-Switzerland Exchange Agreement, which took effect on 10 June 2003, provides an opportunity for young citizens of one country to improve their language and professional skills by staying and working under normal working conditions as company trainees in the other country for a maximum period of 18 months.

Cantonal Officials of St. Gallen at the Residence



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (center) hosted a return dinner on 11 May 2005 at her Residence in honor of Governing Council President Dr. *Josef Keller* (left) and State Councillor *Hans Ulrich Stöckling* (right) of the Canton of St. Gallen and their spouses, as well as FHO Managing Director *Peter Wieser* (second from right), and Prof. *Klaus Wellerdieck* (third from right) and Prof. *Horst Hodel* (rightmost) of the University of Applied Sciences NTB in Buchs, St. Gallen.

Successful 112th IPU General Assembly in Manila



Members of the Swiss Delegation to the 112th IPU General Assembly in Manila call on the President of the Senate, Senator *Franklin Drilon*.

The Interparliamentary Union (IPU) successfully held its 112th General Assembly on April 3-8, 2005 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila. As Speaker of the host parliament, Senate President Franklin Drilon presided over the General Assembly.

Switzerland was represented by a delegation of eight (8) lawmakers led by Dr. *Peter Bieri*, Vice President of the Council of States. The other members of the delegation included Mr. *Hermann Bürgi* and Mr. *Fritz Schiesser* from the Council of States, and Ms. *Brigitta M. Gadiant*, Mr. *Paul Günter*, Mr. *Felix Gutzwiller*, Ms. *Doris Stumpf*, and Mr. *Felix Walker* from the National Council. Two lawmakers also brought along their wives to see the Philippines.

In a related development, Senator Drilon has been invited by Mr. *Bruno Frick*, President of the Council of States, to visit the Swiss Parliament in Berne as his official guest on 19 October 2005.

Philkids Foundation Benefit Concert in Badenweiler



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* delivering her brief remarks at the benefit concert Kurhaus Badenweiler, Germany on 14 May 2005 sponsored by the Lions Club of Schliengen, with Lions Club President *Karl-Heinz Becker* and the *Ensemble Spätschicht* on stage. Proceeds of the concert will support the scholarship program of Philkids Foundation, a project of Honorary Consul *Daniel Andreas Vogel* of Basel.

Babaylan Conference on Integration in Winterthur



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* was the guest speaker at the Conference on Integration, Participation and Empowerment organized by Babaylan Switzerland on 21 May 2005 in Winterthur. At left is Atty. *Cecile Jimenez*, Human Rights lawyer of the Geneva Forum, who spoke on Swiss migration policies.

Speaker Frick and Schwyz Officials at the Residence



Speaker of the Council of States *Bruno Frick* thanks Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* at the return dinner she hosted at her Residence on 08 March 2005 in honor of him, the Governing Council President *Kurt Zibung* (left) and State Councillor *Peter Reuteler* (right) of the Canton of Schwyz, and their spouses. Speaker Frick also comes from the Canton of Schwyz.

Minister Alarilla ends her tour of duty in Berne



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* honors Minister *Marilyn J. Alarilla* with a farewell lunch at the Residence on 17 February 2005. Invited as guests were her friends and acquaintances from the Federal government offices, the business community, the consular corps and other organizations.

Minister and Consul General *Marilyn J. Alarilla* left the Embassy on 26 April 2005 after completing her tour of duty in Berne. She was honored with a farewell lunch at the Residence by Ambassador Tolentino, who cited her for her exemplary and dedicated service to the Embassy. At the farewell dinner in her honor at the China Imperial Restaurant on 10 February 2005, she received a souvenir gift from the Embassy family. Besides being the Embassy's executive officer, she directed the Embassy's commemorative book project as the book's co-author. She was active in the diplomatic circles in Berne and served as the Secretary of the Consular Corps of Berne.

Minister Monsanto assumes post in Berne

Minister *Lamberto V. Monsanto* arrived Berne and assumed his post as Minister and Consul General at the Embassy on 17 May 2005, replacing Minister Alarilla.

He passed the Foreign Service Officer's Examination in 1981 and was assigned as Third Secretary and Vice Consul in Brunei in 1986, as Consul in Kobe, Japan in 1990, as First Secretary and Consul in Ottawa, Canada in 1996 and as Minister Counsellor in Tel-Aviv, Israel in 1999.

Minister Monsanto hails from Sto.

Tomas, Batangas and was the Executive Director of the Office of Asean Affairs in the Home Office prior to his assignment to Switzerland. The Embassy warmly welcomes him to Berne.



Minister *L. V. Monsanto*

Europe Meeting on Igorot Cordillera Culture



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* was the guest of honor during the Gala Night on 07 May 2005 of the 3rd Igorot Cordillera BIMAAC- Europe (ICBE) Consultation. The Europe-wide meeting hosted by BIBAK Switzerland was held from 5 to 8 May 2005 at Hotel Friedegg in Aeschi.

Feast of All Nations in Wil, St. Gallen



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* and Administrative and Cultural Officer *Maria Manglo-Simmons* with colorfully dressed members of the Filipino community in Wil, St. Gallen during the celebration of the Feast of All Nations on 24 June 2005, arranged by Fr. Bernhard Raas, who earlier served in Vigan, Ilocos Sur where he established the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan for handicapped Filipinos.

Embassy hosts ASPAG Ambassadors' Monthly Lunch



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* with the Ambassadors of Thailand, South Korea, North Korea, Vietnam, Japan and Malaysia (from left to right) belonging to the Asia Pacific Group (ASPAG) at the Residence for the monthly working lunch on 25 May 2005. Guest speaker was Ambassador *Jean-Jacques de Dardel* (third from left), Chief of Division I (Europe, Council of Europe and OSCE) of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

Tina Heiter donates paintings to the Embassy



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* receiving a painting entitled "Concrete Jungle" from Filipina artist Ms. *Tina B. Heiter* on 26 June 2005 at the Embassy. She donated a total of six (6) of her own paintings to the Embassy to enliven its reception area and conference room. Ms. Heiter hails from Iligan City and lives in Elgg near Winterthur.

UP Singing Ambassadors visit Switzerland



The UP Singing Ambassadors (UPSA), led by its founder and conductor, Mr. *Ed Manguiat* (center), and their hosts were guests of Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (leftmost) at her Residence in Berne for a dinner on 14 June 2005. In full concert attire, they rendered several numbers in what turned out to be an impromptu evening concert of marvelous choral music. The award-winning group held concerts in Berne, Lucerne and Zurich while visiting Switzerland during their European tour to participate and compete in prestigious choral competitions.

Theresa Lädeli continues fund raising



Ambassador *Rora Navarro-Tolentino* (second from right) and Administrative and Cultural Officer *Maria Manglo-Simmons* with Mrs. *Monika Baumann* (rightmost) and other members of Theresa Lädeli during their fund-raising sale on 28 June 2005 in Schloss Jegenstorf. Proceeds from the *Brockenstube* sale will help support their drugstore project in Davao.