



# Philippines-China CHRONICLE



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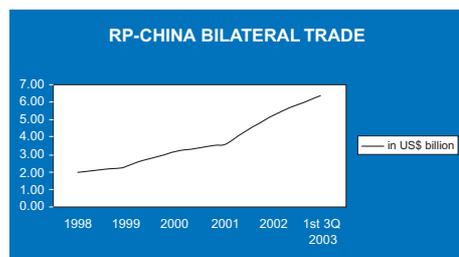
## RP-China trade hits US\$6.43 B by third quarter

Trade between the Philippines and China hit US\$6.43 billion in the first three quarters of the year, exceeding the bilateral trade figure of 2002 by US\$1.33 billion or 23 per cent. The figure also represents a 76 per cent increase over the figure for the same period in 2003.

According to figures released by the Chinese General Administration of Customs, Philippine exports to China amounted to US\$4.3 billion, while imports from China reached US\$2.13 billion, representing year-on-year increases of 96 and 46 percentages, respectively. The Philippines posted a trade surplus of US\$2.16 billion, the highest surplus ever for the Philippines in the history of RP-China bilateral trade.

RP-China trade has been growing at a rate of 26.6 per cent in the past five years. In 2002, trade volume reached US\$5.2 billion.

These positive figures have been noted by both Chinese and Philippine leaders. In a bilateral meeting with Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on 7 October at the sidelines of the 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that China is determined to double its trade with the Philippines over the next few years.



## Overseas Absentee Voting: Filipinos in Beijing want to vote

It appears that most Filipinos in Beijing would like to vote when the Philippines implements the historic Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Act next year.

According to the Consular Section of the Embassy, 242 Filipinos filed applications for OAV registration and certification when the two-month application period ended on 30 September. This figure exceeded the Embassy's target of 197 registrants.

Worldwide, some 360,000 overseas Filipinos applied to vote, exceeding by 44 per cent the 250,000 target of the Commission for Elections (COMELEC). There are some 7.5 million Filipinos around the world.

COMELEC is processing the registration documents and will come up with a list of absentee voters by January 2004.

## NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo visits RP

Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, paid an official visit to the Philippines on 30 August-2 September 2003 at the invitation of Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin M. Drilon.

During his visit, Mr. Wu called on Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The two leaders witnessed the exchange of documents on the Currency Swap Agreement between the People's Bank of China and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). The agreement will enable the BSP to swap Philippine peso for China's renminbi up to its equivalent of US\$1 billion, effective for three years for balance of payments and short-term liquidity support.

President Arroyo and Chairman Wu also witnessed the signing ceremony of the MOU on the Utilization of

US\$400 Million Preferential Buyer's Credit from the Government of China to the Government of the Philippines to finance the construction of Phase I Section 1 of the North Luzon Railways Project.

While in Manila, Mr. Wu also attended the Fourth General Assembly of the Association of Asian Parliaments of Peace (AAPP).



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with Chairman Wu Bangguo during the latter's visit to Manila. In photo, L-R: Speaker Jose de Venecia, Chairman Wu, President Arroyo, Mme. Zhang Ruizhen and Mme. Gina de Venecia.

## DOT Secretary Gordon attends WTO meeting in Beijing

Developing countries should be allowed to use a portion of development assistance funds for advertising of tourism products. This was one of the proposals of Philippine Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon during the 15th Session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in Beijing on 19-24 October 2003.

In a statement he delivered at a roundtable organized by the Tourism Recovery Committee of the WTO, Secretary Gordon said that developing countries often do not have budgets to do publicity campaigns in wide-reaching media outfits like CNN or Asahi Shimbun. However, if such countries were allowed to use development assistance funds for advertising, more people would become aware of the tourism products offered by poor countries and venture to such countries. Tourism helps alleviate poverty. More tourists will aid the development efforts of poor countries.

Secretary Gordon, who was Chairman of the East Asia and Pacific Commission of the WTO until the 15th

General Assembly, also reiterated his call that countries should not issue travel advisories indiscriminately as the damage they create is difficult to patch and advisories are unfair for a country that is beefing up its security and safety measures. He said that if advisories indeed have to be issued, they should be reviewed by the issuing country on a weekly basis.

Finally, Secretary Gordon also reiterated at the meeting that Asia could work together while competing against each other to promote tourism. He called this "coopetition" - cooperation and competition. He cited China's experience with SARS. When China was hit by SARS, the whole Asian region was affected. Thus, the whole Asia had to work together to tell the world that Asia is safe. Secretary Gordon also said that intra-regional travel is a fast way for tourism to recover in Asia. He also said that Asia should project itself as an attractive and multi-faceted single destination to appeal to long-haul travelers.

At the WTO meeting, the Philippines was elected to a seat in the WTO's Executive Council. The Philippines' term will last from 2003 to 2007.



Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon shaking hands with China National Tourism Administration Chairman He Guangwei.

## Health Secretary visits Beijing

Secretary Manuel Dayrit visited Beijing on 15 - 17 October 2003, to attend the UNICEF-organized International Meeting on Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency Disorder at Beijing's Presidential State Guest Hotel. Secretary Dayrit was accompanied by Directors Myrna Cabotaje and Leticia Barbara Gutierrez.

## DIPLOMATIC NOTES

## RP, Mongolia celebrate 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

The Philippines and Mongolia celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations on 11 October 2003.

To mark the occasion, Manila and Ulaanbaatar agreed to exhibit documentary programs on each other's country in their national television stations to help Filipinos and Mongolians know each other better.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, in a letter addressed to Foreign Minister Luvsan Erdenechuluun, on the occasion of the anniversary underscored the "continuous interaction between Mongolia and the Philippines at the bilateral and multilateral levels" and efforts "to seek further avenues of cooperation."

President Natsagiin Bagabandi was the first

Mongolian head of State to visit the Philippines. During his visit on 1 - 4 September 2000, the Philippines and Mongolia signed agreements on reciprocal promotion and protection of investments, air services, scientific and technological cooperation, cultural cooperation, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Foreign Service Institute and the Ministry Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

The Philippines and Mongolia have consistently supported each other and promoted their common agenda in multilateral fora. A regular exchange of official visits take place between the two sides. The volume of bilateral trade has been growing at a steady rate, reaching US\$ 73,000 in 2002 from US\$ 17,800 in



Philippine Ambassador to China, Mongolia and the DPRK Josue L. Villa, who recently retired, was feted to a sumptuous picnic by the tiny Filipino community in Ulaan Baatar during his farewell visit to the city. Majority of the Filipinos in UB work either as missionaries or for UN agencies. Also in the picture is Third Secretary Charlotte Tang.

2001. Philippine firms express keen interest in investing in Mongolia's mining sector.

The Philippine Embassy in Beijing covers Mongolia.

## RP attends 5th International Conference on New and Restored Democracies

The Philippines, founder of the International Conference on New and Restored Democracies (ICNRD) in 1988, participated in its 5th meeting in Ulaan Baatar on 10-12 September 2003.

The Philippine delegation to the conference was composed of DFA Undersecretary Franklin M. Ebdalin, Ambassador Josue L. Villa (who recently retired), Congressman Nereus Acosta, Philippine Ambassador to Bangladesh Jose Lino Guerrero, and Embassy Third Secretary Marie-Charlotte Tang.

As the founder of the Conference, the Philippines was given the honor of speaking first. In its statement, the Philippines said that while the days of dictatorship and the Cold War are largely over, challenges like the war on terrorism, international illegal drug trafficking, exploitation of women and children, other transnational crimes, and the continuing struggle against poverty and want continue to hound democracies.

The Philippines, citing its recent "People Power 2" experience, also said that governments in transition must not be complacent, that democratization is a continuous and dynamic process and that the gains of restored or newly-won democracy must never be taken for granted.

During its first meeting in Manila, the ICNRD, which aims to promote democracy and democratic practices among nations, had only 13 participants. Now, its participation has grown to some 119 countries and its work is recognized and supported by the UN.



RP officials in scenic Mongolia at the sidelines of the 5th ICNRD in Ulaan Baatar. L-R: Philippine Ambassador to Bangladesh Jose Lino Guerrero; Congressman Nereus Acosta; DFA Undersecretary Franklin M. Ebdalin and Philippine Ambassador to China Josue L. Villa.

## ACB fetes Vice Premier Wu Yi, VFM Wang Yi

The ASEAN Committee, Beijing (ACB) hosted a dinner in honor of H.E. Madame Wu Yi, Vice Premier of the State Council of China, on 16 September 2003.

During the dinner, Madame Wu briefed the ACB on China's preparation on the possible re-emergence of SARS, the revaluation of the renminbi, China's economic development and political restructuring, the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, and the ASEAN Summit.

On 29 September, ACB also hosted a luncheon for Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi.



ACB Ambassadors and officials posing with Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi (center) and Vice Minister Wang Yi (third from right).

## Filipino is first Catholic bishop in Mongolia

His Eminence Wenceslaw Padilla, a self-effacing priest who pioneered missionary work in the former communist country in 1992, was ordained on 29 August 2003 by Pope John Paul II as the chief vicar of Christ in Mongolia. He serves Mongolia's small but growing Catholic community and carries out welfare programs for the street children of Ulaan Baatar.

The assumption of His Eminence Padilla lends the Filipino nation a shining face and a cultural symbol in Mongolia and augurs well for the development of Philippine-Mongolian bilateral ties, which marked its 30th year on 11 October 2003.

## CPC invites NPC delegation to China

The Communist Party of China (CPC), in efforts to promote party-to-party ties overseas, invited a delegation from the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) of the Philippines to visit Beijing, Kunming, and Guilin on 27 October - 3 November 2003.

NPC President Frisco San Juan headed the delegation. The other members of the delegation were Representative Francis Nepomuceno and spouse Regina Nepomuceno; Representative Harry Angping and spouse Zenaida Angping; Mr. Simeon Kintanar and spouse Ma. Socorro Kintanar; and Director Ma. Bernardita de la Cuesta of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Lu Yongxiang, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress met with the delegation on 28 October 2003 at the Great Hall of the People. Mr. Cai Wu, Vice Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, was present at the meeting. Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Ruth Morales Prado and Third Secretary and Vice Consul Elizabeth Te attended the meeting on behalf of the Embassy.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## LEGAL CORNER

Jerry works in a service company in downtown Beijing. He hails from the Bicol Region and is assigned in the Property Department together with three other Filipino personnel: Milly, Pablo and Kathy. Once in a while Jerry would join Milly, Pablo and Kathy in the apartment shared by Milly and Kathy for some drinks and karaoke singing.

One Friday evening, as they gathered in Milly's and Kathy's apartment for their regular cocktails and singing, Pablo invited Felix and Debbie to join them. Felix and Debbie have just arrived in Beijing and were in the process of looking for jobs. Jerry was happy to know that Felix and Debbie were also from Bicol and the three of them were soon engaged in animated conversation using the Bicol language. Their conversation suddenly turned into a teasing episode, with Jerry being the object of their prank. To the surprise of everybody, Jerry suddenly screamed in objection to the teasing he was receiving then threw himself out of the third floor balcony where he was then seated with Felix and Debbie. Fortunately, Jerry fell on the shrubs lining the side of the apartment building and suffered only some broken ribs and a fractured arm. Jerry then returned home to Bicol. Informed of the incident, Jerry's mother in Bicol advised him to sue Felix and Debbie for damages.

**Q:** Will the case be tenable? Where could the case be filed?

**A:** Philippine law provides a venue where victims of quasi-delict could recover compensation from those liable for causing them damages. The term quasi-delict covers all acts which are short of being criminal but have otherwise caused harm to others. The important question to be answered is to identify the proximate cause of the harm caused to another.

In Jerry's case, it is clear that Jerry suffered physical damages arising from his fall from the third floor balcony which required medical intervention. The act of falling appears to be voluntary. However, the reason which triggered Jerry to jump from the balcony needs to be identified. If the proximate cause, i.e., the main reason which led to Jerry's fall, was the teasing made by Felix and Debbie, then Felix and Debbie could be made liable to pay compensation to Jerry. The flow of events needs to be clearly established. If the teasing contributed to the reason causing Jerry to jump from the balcony but was not the main factor, the liability of Felix and Debbie could be mitigated, if not eliminated. In establishing the flow of events, there is also the need to be guided by reasonableness in order to eliminate remote causes for the incident.

The case could be filed in Bicol where Jerry resides. He could identify properties owned by Felix and Debbie in the Philippines which the court could seize should there be a favorable judicial judgment in his favor.

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## PROFILE

Alex G. Chua  
Consul

Philippine Consulate General, Guangzhou



Consul Alex G. Chua arrived at the Philippine Consulate in Guangzhou on 26 June 2003.

Alex graduated from the Lyceum University of the Philippines where he took up his Bachelor of Science in

Foreign Service and Bachelor of Law. He received a Diploma De Langue Francaise from the *Alliance Francaise des Philippines*. At the DFA, he attended various training courses, including the UN Attachment Program and the ASEAN Mid-Level Career Officers Program.

Consul Chua joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1978. He is considered an "old hand" in China having been posted as Legal Officer and then Vice Consul to the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong (1985-1993); and then as Third Secretary and Vice Consul, Second Secretary and Consul and First Secretary and Consul (1995-2001) at the Philippine Embassy in Beijing. His previous appointments in the Department of Foreign Affairs were as Assistant of the Scholarship Division of the then Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs and Information; Assistant of the China Division of the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs; Legal Officer of the Citizenship Evaluation Committee of the Office of Consular Affairs (OCA); Acting Director of the Consular Assistance Division, OCA; Acting Director of Passport Division, OCA; and Director of the Investigation and Prosecution Division, Office of Legal Affairs.

Consul Chua is married to Mari Marla Catan-Chua, and is blessed with two wonderful children named Angleli Marie "Mian" Chua and Abraham Almar "Abe" Chua.

*(This is the 15th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats currently serving in China.)*

## New agriculture attaché



The Embassy welcomes the addition of its newest officer—Agriculture Attaché William S. Co.

The mild-mannered 56-year Co holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Sto. Tomas and a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of the Philippines. He is the current Board Chairman of the Institute of Creative Computer Technology Colleges in Taytay, Rizal.

## 2nd Global Filipino Networking Convention

The Philippines will host the 2nd Global Filipino Networking Convention on 15-18 December 2003 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC). The main objective of the Convention is to promote the importance of networking as a powerful tool to unify and empower Filipinos overseas to enable them to become positive tools for nation building.

Executive Order No. 208 dated 17 May 2003 created a public-private sector task force for the 2nd Global Filipino Networking Convention. Serving as the Honorary Chair of the task force is Presidential Adviser Heherson T. Alvarez. Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon serves as the Chair while Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas is the Co-Chair.

Interested Filipinos may get in touch with Mr. Alfredo T. Sumala, Attaché of the Embassy, for promotional flyers, registration forms and queries regarding the convention. The official website with information regarding the event is hyper linked to the DFA website ([www.dfa.gov.ph](http://www.dfa.gov.ph)).

## Filipina receives Friendship Award



Rose Linda Bautista, a Philippine national working with Winrock International's China office to implement a program to foster women's leadership in China, was recently awarded the prestigious 2003 Friendship Award by the State Administration for Foreign Experts Affairs. The Friendship Award is the highest award presented by the Chinese government to foreign experts. There are 240,000 foreign experts who are currently working in China.

Ms. Bautista was one of fifty recipients from 19 foreign countries who received the award this year at ceremonies attended by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People on 30 September.

Rose Bautista has worked in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan since 1991 in projects funded by The Ford Foundation to build the capacity of young Chinese in community forestry and to help poor upland communities derive sustainable livelihoods from natural resources. In 2000 she started a women's capacity building and rural development program to foster women's leadership for rural development.

Embassy bids Consuls *bon voyage*

The Embassy officers and staff bid a sad goodbye to veterans Atty. Noel Francisco R. Fernandez III and Mrs. Bernadette Therese C. Fernandez, both Second Secretaries and Consuls of the Embassy. The much-loved couple served in Beijing for six years—1997-2003—and have contributed immensely to the development of Philippines-China relations. They are now once again serving at the DFA headquarters in Manila.

## RP elected to UNSC seat

With the election of the Philippines to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as one its ten non-permanent members, Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople said that the Philippines is prepared to face the challenges of membership and is ready to fulfill the mandate given by the members of the United Nations.

In elections held on 23 October at the UN in New York, the UN General Assembly, by a vote of 179 out of 182 votes cast, elected the Philippines to the UNSC for the term 2004-2005.

This will be the fourth time that the Philippines will be in the Council. The Philippines was an active member of the Council in 1957, 1963 and 1980.

The Secretary said that one of the primary tasks of the Philippines, as a member of the Council, would be to help heal the divisions that were brought about by the military action in Iraq and the early return of Iraq to its people.

The Secretary also said that consensus building and consultation will characterize the term of the Philippines in the Security Council.

## Embassy staff goes on annual pilgrimage to Dezhou

In what has become an annual pilgrimage for the Embassy, recently-retired Philippine Ambassador Josue L. Villa led a delegation of Embassy officers and staff to visit Dezhou in Shandong on 17-18 September 2003.

Dezhou is the burial place of the Sultan of Sulu who died while visiting China during the reign of Emperor Yong Le in the 15th century. Saddened by the death of his friend, the Chinese Emperor honored him with a burial and a tomb befitting a foreign monarch. Two of the Sultan's sons stayed behind to guard his tomb. To this day, his descendants—bearing the family names of either An or Wen, continue to live in Dezhou.

The site of the tomb of the Sultan of Sulu, which has been declared a protected cultural site by China, has been renovated and is now a modest tourist spot in Dezhou.

While in Dezhou, the Embassy personnel called on Dezhou Party Secretary General Huang Sheng and attended the 6th Dezhou International Trade, Economic and Investment Fair.

Dezhou Vice Mayor Miao Zhonghua also showed the Embassy's officers the impressive economic progress that Dezhou has achieved since the Embassy first visited the city in the mid-nineties.



Ambassador Villa and Embassy officers and staff posing with the heir of the Sultan of Sulu.

## Philippines joins 6th Beijing International Tourism Exhibition

The colorful booth of the Philippines at the 6th Beijing International Tourism Exhibition attracted numerous Chinese visitors eager to know more about the Philippines.

Held at the popular Sun Dong An Plaza on Wangfujing on 17-19 October 2003, the Exhibition was opened by officials of the Beijing Municipal Tourism Administration. The Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Ruth Morales Prado and Philippine Tourism Attache to Hong Kong SAR Teresita Mauricio joined the opening ceremony.

Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) Undersecretary Armand Arreza, who was in Beijing to participate in the 15th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, dropped by the booth and was soon seen to be promoting the Philippines to Chinese journalists.

2003 is "Visit Philippines Year." To attract more tourists worldwide, the Philippines has been offering several attractive value-for-money packages called "WOW." WOW, which is also an exclamation of

wonder, stands for different kinds of packages that cater to various tastes. For example, "Warm Over Winter" would be ideal for those seeking the warmth of the sun during bleak winter months. "Wild Over Water," "Watch Our Whales" and "Wander Over Wrecks" are for those who love the beach and life underwater. The "Walk Our Walls" package is a tour that showcases Spanish influences in Philippine history. Shoppers would love the "Wear Our Wares" package. Sweethearts can even get married in the Philippines through the "World Of Weddings" package. There are many more other packages. For more information, please visit the Embassy or look up the DOT website at <http://www.tourism.gov.ph>.



Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Ruth Morales Prado (3rd from left) and spouse Angel (2nd from left), Philippine Tourism Attaché to Hong Kong Tess Mauricio and Embassy Third Secretary Charlotte Tang (5th and 6th from left) with Embassy, DOT-HK and PAL staff.

## Philippine Councilors visit China

At the invitation of the Ministry of Culture, a cultural policy delegation from the Philippine Councilors League (PCL) visited Beijing, Shandong and Shanghai on 16 - 23 October 2003. Mr. Froilan Melendrez, Councilor of Cotabato City and PCL National Chairman, led the following Philippine Councilors in a learning exchange with the Chinese cultural officials: Mr. Carlo Pontico Fortuna, Mr. Joel Amos P. Alejandro, Ms. Wilhelmina Lindo, Mr. Edward Tan, Ms. Rowena Obeda Acosta, Mr. Felix Grepo, Ms. Francis Palanca, Mr. Perpetuo Camila and Mr. Jose Hernandez.

The visit was undertaken to implement Article I, Item 2 of the 2002-2004 Executive Program of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement. The visit was also implemented to reciprocate the visit to the Philippines on 19 - 28 July 2002 of a Chinese cultural delegation headed by Deputy Director-General Li Xin of the Ministry of Culture's Bureau of External Cultural Relations.

## CHED participates in China Education Exhibition

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) participated in the China International Education Exhibition which was held in Beijing on 18 - 19 October 2003 at the Beijing International Convention Center. CHED Executive Director Dr. Roger Perez led the following CHED officials in promoting Philippine higher education and in strengthening international education cooperation and exchanges with China and other participating countries: 1) Ms. Maybel Gutierrez, Education Program Specialist; 2) Mr. Charlie Calimlim, Chief, Management and Information Systems; and 3) Ms. Joy Bacwaden, Information Officer IV.

## NCCA Chairman visits China

At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Chen Xiaoguang, Vice Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Chairman Evelyn B. Pantig led a cultural delegation to visit Beijing, Xi'an, Hangzhou, and Shanghai on 7 - 14 September 2003. The visit was undertaken to implement Article I, Item 1 of the 2002-2004 Executive Program of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement. The delegation was composed of: 1) Mr. Fernando Josef, Vice President and Artistic Director, Cultural Center of the Philippines; 2) Ms. Prudenciana Cruz, Director, National Library of the Philippines; 3) Ms. Araceli Salas, NCCA Commissioner; and 4) Ms. Teresa Carlos, NCCA Board Secretary.

In a luncheon hosted in her honor by Vice Minister Chen, Chairman Pantig, who also holds the position of Undersecretary for Tourism, promised to further promote bilateral cultural exchanges between the Philippines and China.



NCCA Chairman Evelyn Pantig discusses with Vice Culture Minister Chen Xiaoguang cultural projects to be implemented between the Philippines and China.