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New Chinese leaders meet Ambassadors



On 26 March 2003, H.E. Mr. Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the Communist Party and President of the People's Republic of China, together with H.E. Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council and Chinese Vice President H.E. Mr. Zeng Qinghong, met with more than 150 Ambassadors and representatives of international organizations in Beijing.

Ambassador J. L. Villa warmly congratulated H.E. President Hu Jintao and conveyed to him the warmest greetings and best wishes of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Filipino people on his assumption to office as President of the People's Republic of China. President Hu Jintao assured Ambassador Villa that China will continue to work to further strengthen the friendly relations and cooperation between China and the Philippines.

Philippine-Sino Center for Agricultural Technology inaugurated

The Philippine-Sino Center for Agricultural Technology (PhilSCAT) was formally inaugurated on 20 March 2003 with H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as Guest of Honor. PhilSCAT is located inside the campus of the Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, occupying 9.78 hectares. It is the first grant project of China to the Philippines initiated by then Premier Zhu Rongji during his official visit to the Philippines in November 1999.

The project, costing P500 million, is envisioned to serve as the focal area for bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture modernization through the introduction of hybrid rice technology and farm machinery. The Philippines is expected to attain self-sufficiency in rice by 2004 through the use of Chinese hybrid rice variety.

PhilSCAT features state-of-the-art facilities such as an integrated mechanical technology testing laboratory, mechanical service



H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo receives from H.E. Wang Chunggui, Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines (right), the deed of donation of PhilSCAT. With them is Nueva Ecija Governor Tomas N. Joson III.

workshop, and post-harvest workshop that will enhance the agricultural research, development, and extension activities in the Philippines.

The Department of Agriculture is designated as the executing agency, with the Central Luzon State University as the lead implementing agency. The Bureau of Postharvest, Research, & Extension, the Philippine Rice Research Institute, the Agricultural Training Institute, and the Regional Field Unit III of the Department of Agriculture serve as partner agencies.

Philippines holds Solo Trade Exhibition in Shanghai

The first ever Philippine Solo Trade Fair was held in Shanghai Exhibition Center on 27 to 30 March 2003. Dubbed as "Ties that Bind: A Philippine Solo Exhibition," the trade fair, which was organized by the Center for International Trade Missions and Expositions (CITEM), was successful in building trade and



DTI Undersecretary Thomas Aquino, Vice Minister of Commerce An Min, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Shanghai Mayor Han Zheng, and Presidential Envoy John Ng cut the ceremonial ribbon at the opening ceremony of the Solo Trade Fair in Shanghai.

economic links with China by way of promoting the best of the Philippines' products.

The opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Mr. Jose de Venecia, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, Representative Harry Angping, Chairman of the House Committee on Trade and Industry, Special Envoy Mr. John Ng, Foreign Undersecretary Delia Albert, Trade Undersecretary Thomas Aquino, Ambassador Josue Villa, RP Consul General to Shanghai Jesus Yabes, and CITEM Executive Director Ms. Felicidad Tan-Co.

The Chinese side was represented by H.E. Mr. Han Zheng, Mayor of Shanghai Municipal People's Government, H.E. Mr. An Min, Vice Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Shanghai Vice Mayor Zhou Yu Peng and Shanghai People's Congress Vice Chairman Zhu Xiao Ming.

The trade fair showcased Philippine companies representing garments, jewelry, fashion accessories, furniture, food and beverage, marine products, resource-based building and decoration materials, cosmetics, automotive parts, information technology (IT)

and IT-enabled services, education services and design services.

Aside from offering the Chinese market a sampling of the best of what the Philippines can offer, the exhibit also gave Philippine companies the opportunity to explore and understand the Chinese market better.

The Philippine side expressed appreciation for the support and assistance extended by the Chinese government.



Speaker Jose de Venecia, Representative and Mrs. Harry Angping, Representative Rodolfo Plaza, DTI Undersecretary Aquino, Ambassador Villa, Consul General Yabes and other Embassy and Consulate officials pose for a group photo at the Trade Exhibition.

DIPLOMATIC NOTES

ASEAN - Beida Forum

The ASEAN Committee, Beijing (ACB) and the Office of International Relations of the Peking University (Beida) jointly organized a discussion on "ASEAN-China Cooperation" on 8 April 2003 at the Centennial Hall of the Peking University.

The ACB was warmly welcomed by University President H.E. Mr. Xu Zhihong, University Council Vice Chairperson H.E. Mr. He Fangchuan, members of the faculty and selected members of the graduate student population.

During the discussion, ACB Chair and Thai Ambassador H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai briefed the body on the extent of ASEAN-China cooperation. A series of questions on ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN in the Asia Pacific region, terrorism, economic globalization were addressed by the ASEAN Ambassadors.

In addressing a question on educational exchanges, Philippine Ambassador Josue L. Villa informed the body that the Philippines supports educational exchanges with China and would welcome Chinese students who wish to learn English or complete university degrees in the Philippines.



Ambassador Villa at the ACB-Beida Joint Discussion with former students at the Philippine Studies Program at Beijing University. From left: Mr. Shi Yang (Antonio) and Ms. Huang Yi (Cathy), both teacher assistants and Mr. Wu Jiewei, lecturer at the Philippine Studies Program.

Filipino Diplomats participate in MFA outreach activity

Mr. Neil Frank Ferrer, Ms. Elizabeth Te, and Ms. Charlotte Tang, Third Secretaries and Vice Consuls of the Philippine Embassy, participated in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Outreach Activity with ASEAN Diplomats in Beijing on 21 March 2003.

Madame Yang Yanyi, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry's Department of Policy Planning, led young Chinese diplomats to discuss with approximately 20 ASEAN diplomats the "Prospect and Impact of Iraqi and North Korean Nuclear Issues upon Asia," vis-à-vis how ASEAN and China will handle these two challenging issues.

Participants found the discussions and exchange of views informative and felt similar meetings be held again in the future.

FM Li Zhaoxing meets with ASEAN Ambassadors

H.E. Mr. Li Zhaoxing, newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, met with ASEAN Ambassadors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 4 April 2003. Foreign Minister Li spoke highly of the friendly and cooperative relations between ASEAN and China. He said that both ASEAN and China are developing countries with economic development as their common task and maintaining a peaceful and stable regional and international environment as their common interests.

He said the new Chinese leadership would promote friendly and reciprocal cooperation with ASEAN members with "regarding neighbors as good friends and partners" as the guiding principle.

Foreign Minister Li also briefed the ASEAN Ambassadors on the efforts of the Chinese government



FM Li Zhaoxing (6th from left) with ASEAN Ambassadors. From left to right: Amb. Abdul Hamid Abdul Jalil (Brunei Darussalam); Amb. Khek Lerang (Cambodia); Amb. Josue Villa (Philippines); Amb. Tran Van Luat (Vietnam); Amb. Don Pramudwinai (Thailand); Amb. Datuk' Abdul Majid Khan (Malaysia); Amb. Chin Siat Yoon (Singapore); Amb. Thongsay Bodhisane (Laos); DCM Than Than Htay, C.D.A. a.i. (Myanmar); DCM Sudargo Manguwidjojo, C.D.A. a.i. (Indonesia); and MFA Director-General Mme. Fu Ying.

ASEAN Ambassadors meet with Vice FM Dai Bingguo

H.E. Mr. Dai Bingguo, newly-appointed Executive Vice Foreign Minister of China, was the special luncheon guest of the ASEAN Ambassadors following their monthly meeting on 21 April 2003. Vice Minister Dai was accompanied by MFA Director General for Asian Department Madame Fu Ying at the luncheon hosted by H.E. Malaysian Ambassador Datuk' Abdul Majid Khan.

VFM Dai and the ambassadors had friendly conversations on various subjects, including the Korean Peninsula problem, the war in Iraq and preparations for the ASEAN Summit Meeting on SARS to take place in Thailand at the end of April 2003.

ASEAN + 3 in Beijing

At their monthly luncheon on 25 March 2003, ASEAN Ambassadors welcomed the presence of MFA Asian Department Director-General H.E. Madame Fu Ying, Japanese Ambassador H.E. Mr. Koreshige Anami, and South Korean Ambassador H.E. Kim Ha Joong,

in addressing the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) disease. He said that the Chinese government attaches importance to fighting the disease and a series of effective measures are being taken. The Chinese side was willing to strengthen communication and cooperation with neighboring countries in this regard.

Foreign Minister Li had earlier served as Vice Foreign Minister, Permanent Representative to the UN, and Ambassador to the United States.

their monthly luncheon on 25 March 2003 which was hosted by H.E. Lao Ambassador Mr. Thongsay Bodhisane.

The ACB and the "Plus 3" guests informally discussed matters of mutual concern. They expressed the hope that ASEAN plus China, Japan, and Korea will continue to deepen political and economic cooperation in the years to come.

Philippine Embassy Team places second in bowling tournament

The Philippine Embassy fielded two teams during the recently concluded Winter Season of the Beijing Diplomatic Bowling League, with one team, the Pinoys, landing in second place. The Pinoys is composed of Noel Fernandez, Freddie Sumala, Jane Sumala, and Roberto Lagarde. The second team, the Kilabot, settled for fifth place with Neil Ferrer, Celesty Diano, John Chua, Roberto Oña, and Christine Dimaano as members. The Indonesian team grabbed the championship cup. Other diplomats that participated in the tournament were from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Poland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

From the Consul's Desk**SARS Update**

Filipinos in China are requested to strictly observe proper hygiene, frequent washing of hands, proper rest and diet, and to consult the doctor if high-grade fever develops, accompanied by breathing difficulty, coughing, chills, or muscle pains. No medication against SARS is expected to be developed in the next few weeks making it important to maintain good health in order to ensure that the body's immune system would be prepared to contain the SARS virus once a person is affected. Statistics show that there is a high percentage of recovery from this illness. The important thing is to be kept well informed about the situation. Daily updates on SARS may be obtained from the World Health Organization website at www.who.int. Those without access to internet may call the Embassy at 6532-4678 or 13911180495.

Illegal Recruitment

The Embassy has noted the continued operations of illegal recruiters, both Filipinos and foreigners, who deploy Filipino entertainers in Chinese hotels and bars without securing the necessary permit from the local cultural bureau. This practice places the well-being of Filipino entertainers in danger since local police authorities could arrest foreigners, including Filipinos, working without the necessary permits. Filipinos who are victims of illegal recruitment are requested to report to the Embassy and cooperate with relevant Philippine Government agencies in order to stop the practices of illegal recruiters.

Safekeeping of Passports

There have been a number of cases where passports of Filipino employees are being kept by local employers for various reasons. The Embassy consulted the Chinese Foreign Ministry on this matter and was informed that local employers are prohibited from keeping the passports of their foreign employees. Filipinos working in China are requested not to surrender their passports to their local employers. The passports may be deposited, at no cost, with the Embassy for safekeeping during the duration of their stay in China. This will prevent unscrupulous employers from keeping the passports of Filipino employees and threatening not to return the passports if the Filipino employees do not heed their instructions.

PROFILE

Elizabeth T. Te
Third Secretary and Vice Consul
Philippine Embassy, Beijing



(This is the 12th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats currently serving in China.)

Ms. Elizabeth T. Te, or Beth to friends and colleagues, joined the Embassy in May 2002 on her first foreign posting. She handles matters pertaining to China's domestic developments and foreign relations, as well as developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Mongolia. In May, she will handle consular matters in addition to the external relations of China, DPRK and Mongolia.

Beth completed her primary and secondary education from Saint Jude Catholic School of Manila. She obtained her bachelor's (Tourism) and Master's (International Studies) degrees from the University of the Philippines. She was a scholar of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and obtained a Master's degree in Foreign Affairs and Trade from Monash University, Australia.

After passing the Foreign Service Officers' Examinations, Beth joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in August 1997. She took her on-the-job training in the North Asia (China) Division, and later successively served as Principal Assistant in the Pacific Division of the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs and at the Office of Policy Planning and Coordination.

Prior to joining the foreign service, she worked as a research assistant of the Philippine-China Development Resource Center and contributed articles to its quarterly magazine, *China Currents*. She later served as a researcher at the National Security Council where she handled issues pertaining to the environment, developments on the Korean Peninsula and in Japan, among other portfolios. She also worked as a researcher at the Foreign Service Institute where she handled the China desk. In 1995, Beth came to China to teach at the Xiamen Tourism School. She was also a part-time lecturer in the University of the Philippines.

Beth was born in Quezon City to parents of ethnic Chinese lineage. She speaks and reads Mandarin.

Forum on Absentee Voting held in Manila

Philippine Embassy Minister and Consul General Ruth Morales Prado participated in the first consultations forum on the mechanics, conduct and implementation of the Absentee Voting process, held in Manila on 28 - 29 April 2003. The forum was attended by officers from Philippine Foreign Service Posts in the Asia - Pacific region. Other fora are scheduled to be held for diplomatic and consular missions in the other regions of the world.

LEGAL CORNER

Ruby graduated from a leading Philippine university and earned a graduate degree from an Ivy League university in the United States. She joined a Makati-based financial consultant firm which is affiliated with an international consultancy group. Her company asked her to head the firm's Beijing office where she met Badong, a struggling Filipino entertainer who only finished high school. After months of courtship, Ruby accepted Badong's offer of marriage. They were wed in a Beijing church and went to the Philippines for their honeymoon. A few months later, Ruby went to the DFA Regional Consular Office in Dito-Doon to renew her passport which was about to expire. She completed the passport application form and submitted the other requirements to Lumar, the passport officer. Lumar noted that Ruby recently got married and promptly told her that her new passport would be issued using her married name. Ruby ask Lumar to renew her passport in her maiden name and told him that she has no intention of using her husband's surname. Lumar refused and told Ruby that "the law" requires women to use their husband's surname after getting married.

Q: Is Lumar correct? What options are available to Ruby?

A: Lumar is wrong. There is no Philippine law which requires a woman to drop her maiden name and adopt the surname of her husband. Article 370 of the Philippine Civil Code states that a married woman may use her husband's surname. The article uses the operative word "may" which is permissive, not mandatory, in nature. Ruby could insist on retaining her maiden name in her passport. If Lumar refuses to renew her passport with her maiden name, Ruby should secure the services of a lawyer to institute the appropriate actions to compel the DFA Regional Consular Office in Dito-Doon to renew Ruby's passport using her maiden name. Lumar's position is untenable and could not be sustained by the courts.

Hybrid rice in the Philippines



H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Professor Yuan Longping of China, regarded as the Father of Hybrid Rice, roll out a poster on the super breed of grain during a press conference at the Mansion Guesthouse in Baguio City. With them in the photo is Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo (center).

According to President Arroyo, the Philippines could attain self-sufficiency in rice by 2004 if everything goes well with the adoption of the Chinese hybrid rice.

Professor Yuan is a 2001 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Government Service. In giving Professor Yuan the citation, the Ramon Magsaysay Board of Trustees recognized the unique contribution of his research in rice hybridization to food security in Asia.

DFA ASPAC chief visits China

Assistant Secretary Antonio V. Rodriguez, head of the Asian and Pacific Affairs (ASPAC) Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs visited China from 22 to 28 March 2003 upon the invitation of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. In Beijing, he met with H.E. Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Asian Department Director-General Madame Fu Ying.

Assistant Secretary Rodriguez discussed with the MFA officials broad issues covering bilateral relations. He also exchanged views with them on regional and international issues such as ASEAN-China cooperation, the war in Iraq and the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula.

Asst. Secretary Rodriguez, who was accompanied by Mr. Frank Ivan Olea, ASPAC Acting Director, proceeded to Xi'an and Shanghai after Beijing.

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Philippines-China trade continues to grow

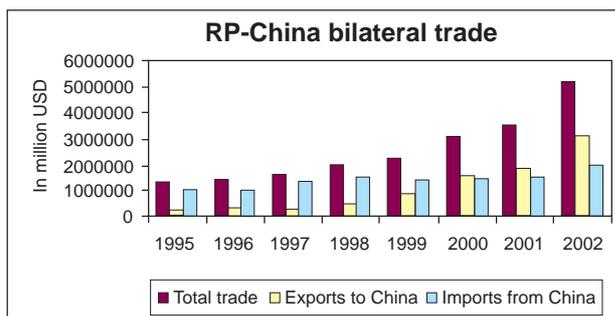
Trade between the Philippines and China grew 70.5 percent year-on-year in the January-March 2003 period, continuing the positive trend in bilateral trade relations.

Based on figures from China's General Administration of Customs, RP-China trade in the first quarter of the year amounted to US\$1.63 billion. Exports to China amounted to US\$1.06 billion while imports from China reached US\$570 million. The figures represent an increase of 90 and 43 percent, respectively. The Philippines posted a trade surplus of US\$496 million.

For the period, the Philippines' top exports to China include electrical machinery and parts, semi-conductors, copper

cathodes and fresh bananas. Top Philippine imports from China include electrical machinery and parts, mineral fuels and oils, mechanical machinery and parts, vehicle parts, plastics, articles of iron and steel and cotton.

RP-China trade posted an average annual growth rate of 26 percent in the past five years. Last year, RP-China trade amounted to US\$5.2 billion, representing a 48 percent increase over 2001. The Philippines enjoyed a trade surplus of US\$1.2 billion.



Philippines and China to boost sports cooperation

At the invitation of Mr. Eric Buhain, Chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission, Mr. Li Zhijian, Deputy Director (with rank of Vice Minister) of the State General Administration of Sport of the People's Republic of China visited the Philippines in March 2003. During the meeting, both sides agreed to work together for the inclusion of wushu as a sport in the 2008 Olympics that will be held in Beijing.

Vice Minister Li was accompanied by Chinese Wushu Federation President Mr. Li Jie and Beijing Olympic Committee Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Liu Baoli.

Chairman Buhain was with Sports Commissioners Leon Montemayor, Ambrosio de Luna, and Michael Barredo.

Among the sports that were placed on top priority by Chairman Buhain are wushu, diving, fin swimming, table tennis, and gymnastics.

In the past, Chinese coaches have been hired by Philippine sports organizations to train Filipino athletes for international competitions in wushu, diving, and badminton. With the continuing dominance of China in regional sports, the Philippines encourages sports exchanges between the two countries and welcomes more Chinese coaches to impart training and skills to Filipino amateur and professional sportsmen.

The Philippines and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Sports Cooperation on 16 May 2001.

Update on Overseas Absentee Voting

The regular national election for President, Vice President, Senators, and Party-List Representatives in the Philippines will be held on 10 May 2004.

Under Republic Act No. 9189, otherwise known as "The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003," all qualified Filipino citizens who are not registered as a voter under Republic Act No. 8189, otherwise known as "The Voters Registration Act of 1996," (the system of continuing registration) shall file an application for registration, while those who are already registered as a voter under the said Act shall file an application for certification.

Only those whose applications for registration or certification have been approved are qualified to file an application to vote in absentia.

The voting period for overseas absentee voters will be from April 11, 2004 to May 10, 2004, except for duly qualified Filipino seafarers who may vote from March 12, 2004 to May 10, 2004. Voting will be held at the Philippine Embassy.

The Embassy will announce in due time the date of registration.

For details, please contact the Embassy at telephone number 6532-1872, or visit the Embassy website at www.philembassy-china.org.