



# Philippines-China CHRONICLE



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## Ambassador Gaa presents credentials in Mongolia



Ambassador Willy C. Gaa inspects the honor guards before presenting his credentials to H.E. Mongolian President Natsagiin Bagabandi on 10 May 2004.



Ambassador Gaa holds talks with Mongolian President Bagabandi.

Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa, who is also the country's Ambassador to Mongolia on a non-resident basis, presented his letters of credence to Mongolian President Natsagiin Bagabandi on 10 May 2004 in stately ceremony at the Government House in Ulaan Baatar.

In the courtesy call that followed, the Mongolian President said he was happy to see bilateral relations developing under new conditions. He noted the potential for the exchange of cultural delegations. He added that Mongolians are increasingly becoming

interested to work overseas as contract workers, and noted the Philippines' experience in the legal protection of its citizens abroad.

President Bagabandi also noted that Mongolia and the Philippines support each other in the United Nations and other international fora, and expressed appreciation to the Philippines for sending a high-level delegation to the 5th International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD) which Mongolia hosted in 2003.

Ambassador Gaa expressed the Philippines' continuing support for Mongolia as a Friend of the Chair of the ICNRD. He informed President Bagabandi that, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the Philippines can enhance cooperation with Mongolia in the UNSC. The Philippines also supported Mongolia's bid to become a member of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

During the visit to Mongolia, the Ambassador paid courtesy calls on Chairman Sanjibegziin Tumur-Ochir of the State Great Khural, Mongolia's Parliament; Foreign Minister Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun, and Director General Ms. O. Enkhsetseg of the Multilateral Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Ambassador also had an informal exchange of views with Mr. Tsolmon, incoming Director-General of the Asia Department of the Mongolian MFA.

Ambassador Gaa was accompanied during this visit to Mongolia by Mrs. Linda Gaa, Third Secretary Elizabeth Te, and Defense and Armed Forces Attaché Col. Samuel L. Narbuada.

## Ambassador Gaa presents credentials in DPRK

Ambassador Willy C. Gaa presented his letters of credence to H.E. Kim Yong Nam, President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 16 June 2004 in a solemn ceremony at the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang, making him the Philippines' second non-resident Ambassador to the DPRK.

In the one-on-one talks after the ceremony, H.E. Kim Yong Nam took particular note of the Ambassador's role in the formalization of RP-DPRK ties and expressed confidence that he would do much to further promote relations. Ambassador Gaa was the Philippine Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary for Asian and Pacific Affairs when the two countries established diplomatic relations on 12 July 2000.

The DPRK Presidium President also expressed his warmest greetings to President Arroyo and asked the Ambassador to convey the appreciation of the DPRK Government for her letter of sympathy to the victims of

the Ryonghchon incident and their families.

Ambassador Gaa visited Pyongyang from 15 to 19 June 2004. He was accompanied by First Secretary and Consul Jaime Victor B. Ledda and Defense Attaché Col. Samuel Narbuada.

During his visit, Ambassador Gaa also called on Vice Foreign Minister Kim Yong Il, Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Ri Ryong Nam, Vice Chairman Jon Yong Jin of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Chief of Protocol Jo In Chol and Director Ma Chol Su of the Asian Affairs Department of the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Ambassador Gaa meets with H.E. DPRK President of the Presidium Kim Yong Nam on 16 June 2004.

## China congratulates President Arroyo, renews commitment for cooperation



Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing led a delegation of Chinese Foreign Ministry officials

to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on 30 June 2004 and to personally convey the message of congratulations and best wishes from H.E. Chinese President Hu Jintao and the people of China.

During the call of Minister Li to President Arroyo, he emphasized that the level of bilateral relations between the Philippines and China is at its best in history. The two countries also renewed a common commitment to intensify bilateral cooperation.

In preparation for the 30th anniversary of RP-China relations in June 2005, both sides agreed to pursue closer cooperation in agricultural production, infrastructure, in particular, railways, mining and housing to boost the level of economic cooperation. President Arroyo said that the 30th anniversary will be a milestone that both sides will celebrate in a meaningful way.

The President also informed Minister Li that the Philippines recently achieved its highest growth rate in agricultural productivity in 15 years. She acknowledged the support of the Chinese government for her administration's agricultural development agenda, particularly the hybrid rice production program.

President Arroyo also stressed that China's financing of the Kalookan-Malolos leg of the Northrail project is vital to her administration's agenda to build a rail-based mass transit system, to promote growth centers outside Manila and to decongest the metropolis. Minister Li expressed China's interest to work closely with the Philippines in the development of railway infrastructure in the country.

In keeping with the consensus reached between President Arroyo and President Jiang Zemin during her visit to China in October 2001, the meeting also affirmed the commitment of both sides to pursue efforts to transform the South China Sea into an area of cooperation and to further promote the spirit of dialogue in finding ways to resolve the disputes in the area.

## DIPLOMATIC NOTES

## MEETINGS

The Philippines participated in several regional and multilateral meetings held in Beijing and nearby provinces, including the following:

**International Seminar on Ecological Construction and Strategies for Controlling Soil and Water Losses in Overfarming Land and Ecologically Fragile Areas, 22-23 June, Guang An, Sichuan**

Dr. Romulo Aggangan, Forestry and Environment Research Division Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development, Department of Science and Technology (PCCARD, DOST) and Embassy Third Secretary Jim Tito San Agustin represented the Philippines in the Seminar.

The Philippine presentation focused on Philippine practices in soil and water conservation, and the inextricable link between rural poverty and environmental degradation.

**Asia Cooperation Dialogue Foreign Ministers Meeting, 21-22 June, Qingdao**

The Philippines joined other Asian countries in calling for more cooperation in energy at the meeting. In his intervention, Special Envoy Rodolfo C. Severino, head of the Philippine delegation, proposed that ACD expand its energy cooperation to include economic efficiency, energy conservation, environmental protection and energy security. At the end of the meeting, the Ministers issued the "Qingdao Initiative" which contained measures for enhancing energy cooperation.

Other members of the Philippine delegation included Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa, Special Assistant Myca Magnolia Maog-Fischer of the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs, and officials from the Philippine Department of Energy.

**Third APEC Medium and Small Enterprises Technology Conference and Fair (APEC METC), 2-6 June, Qingdao**

Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa attended the Fair and was appointed to speak for the group of diplomats joining the fair. In his meetings, Ambassador Gaa noted the economic role of SMEs in APEC member economies, especially in terms of job-creation.

The fair's objective was to enhance economic and trade cooperation between APEC members and promote the overall development of SMEs.

**First ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultation Meeting on Youth, 25-26 May, Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region**

Third Secretary Elizabeth Te of the Philippine Embassy represented the Philippines in the Meeting.

The Meeting discussed the draft Beijing Declaration for ASEAN-China Cooperation on Youth and the recommended follow-up activities. The Meeting agreed to convene the Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting for CAMMY I on 27-28 September 2004, and the First China-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth on 29-30 September 2004 in Beijing. It also agreed to convene the ASEAN-China Young Entrepreneurs Forum on 29-30 September 2004, as a Track-2 activity.

**First Workshop for Agriculture Ministers of the ACD, 22-23 May, Beijing**

The Philippine delegation to the workshop was headed by Mr. William S. Co, Agriculture Attaché to Beijing.

In its country presentation, the Philippines highlighted its accomplishments in agriculture for the past six years and said that its immediate goals include self-sufficiency in rice by 2005-2006 and in corn in six years. The ultimate goal is competitive self-sufficiency, such that farmers and fisher folks can engage in the profitable and sustainable export of agricultural products. The Philippines aims to achieve these through government and private sector investments, with full cooperation and support from its Asian neighbors.

At the end of the meeting, the Agriculture Ministers adopted the Joint Initiative of Intensifying Agricultural Cooperation among ACD members.

**27th Food and Agriculture Regional Conference, 17-21 May 2004, Beijing**

The delegation to the Conference was headed by Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dr. Segfredo Serrano and is composed of First Secretary Jaime Victor Ledda, Third Secretary Jim Tito San Agustin and Agricultural Attaché William C. Co.

At the sidelines of the Conference, the Philippine delegation called on FAO Director General Dr. Jacques Diouf on 21 May 2004, during which the Philippines thanked FAO for the singular honor accorded the Philippines through the 2004 Ceres Award that Dr. Diouf presented to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Manila in May. Dr. Diouf explained that the Ceres Award is both a recognition of the country as well as of the head of office, and was awarded to the Philippines because of its major contributions in agriculture, particularly in the areas of integrated pest management and hybrid rice production, and its role in the green revolution. Dr. Diouf also expressed support for the poverty alleviation program of President Arroyo.

**ASEAN-China, ASEAN +3 JCC meetings, 29-30 April, Beijing**

The Philippine delegation to the meetings was led by DFA Assistant Secretary for ASEAN Affairs Susan O. Castrence and composed of DFA ASEAN Affairs Director Lamberto Monsanto and Embassy Third Secretary Marie-Charlotte Tang.

The meetings reviewed the implementation of ASEAN-China and ASEAN+3 projects covering various areas of cooperation.

**Conference on New Security Challenges for Asia and Europe, 21-23 April, Beijing**

The Philippines was represented by Dr. Noel Morada, Executive Director of the Institute of Strategic and Development Studies and Professor of U.P. Diliman; Dr. Renato C. de Castro, Associate Professor and Chair of the International Studies Department, De La Salle University; Mr. Kevin Villanueva, International Relations Programme Manager of the Universidad de Deusto in Bilbao, Vizcaya, Spain and Embassy Third Secretary Elizabeth Te.

Discussions at the Conference focused on three subject areas: perceptions of new security challenges and the concept of comprehensive security; a comparison of Asia and Europe in terms of regional conditions and security mechanisms; and prospects for greater dialogue and cooperation between the two regions.

**1st Planning Conference for RP-China Joint Table-Top Search and Rescue Exercise**

The First Preliminary Planning Conference of the Philippines-China Joint Table-Top Search and Rescue Exercise was held on 11-12 May 2004 in Beijing. Admiral Danilo A. Abinoja of the Philippine Coast Guard headed the Philippine delegation, which included Third Secretary Jim Tito San Agustin of the Philippine Embassy. The Chinese delegation was led by Deputy Director General Zheng Heping of the China Maritime Safety Administration.

The Meeting agreed on the composition of participants for the Final Planning Conference and actual Table-Top Search and Rescue Exercise, which will be held in the Philippines. The Meeting also discussed in detail and approved the scenario for the exercise.

**Chinese mission visits BIMP-EAGA**

A fourteen-member delegation from China's Commerce and Foreign Ministries and the Chinese business sector visited Mindanao on 23-29 April to identify investment opportunities between China and the four countries in the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).

The delegation met with House Speaker Jose De Venecia, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, DFA Undersecretary Sonia C. Brady, Presidential Adviser for Mindanao Paul Dominguez, Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) Chairman Jesus Dureza and Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte. The delegation also met with members of the Chamber of Commerce in Davao as well as Palawan local officials.

This visit by the Chinese delegation is a follow-through of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's commitment at the ASEAN-China Summit in Bali in October 2003 that China would support the BIMP-EAGA.

**RP and China sign 13th Protocol on S&T Cooperation**

The 13th RP-China Protocol on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was signed on 22 April in Manila during the 13th Session of the RP-China Joint Commission on S&T Cooperation on 21-22 April 2004.

Signed by the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the Protocol lists 20 S&T cooperation projects which will be implemented until 2006.

Areas of cooperation range from soil erosion control to robotics. Modes of cooperation include R&D, exchange of experts, attendance in seminars, and training courses or technical workshops.

The Philippine delegation was headed by Dr. Graciano P. Yumul, Jr., Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development (PCIERD) of DOST and Mr. Liu Jun, Director of the Division of Asia and Africa from the MOST.

The RP-China Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was signed in Manila in 1978. The 14th Protocol will be signed in China in 2006.

EMBASSY INDEPENDENCE DAY ACTIVITIES

**Her Excellency's Message on the 106th Anniversary of Philippine Independence**



Only a month ago, we, as a people, exercised one of our most inviolable rights arising as a natural consequence of our freedom and democracy. Our history as a nation is marked with continuous struggles to fight for, and preserve, our democracy against forces that threaten to undermine it. It has been, arguably, a long and arduous process, but we are already witnessing the fruits of our vigilance to preserve this hard-fought freedom.

Freedom from unemployment, freedom from illiteracy, freedom from sickness and disease - we Filipinos all have the same aspirations; aspirations which we hope to attain as the Philippines experiences continual rebirth as a nation.

However, our nation can no longer be defined solely by technical metes and bounds. Globalization has contributed to expand our boundaries to bring 7.4 million Filipinos to almost every corner of the world, both far and near. Filipino workers are diligent partners of our Asian neighbors in their respective



business sectors, in their industries, in their households. Filipinos have contributed much, as they are working side by side our brothers in the region, in true melding of our Asian heritage.

The contributions and noble efforts of our Filipino workers abroad will always be recognized. And as we commemorate Philippine independence, I am proud to salute our modern-day heroes.

*Mabuhay sa inyong lahat!*

*Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo*  
**GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**  
 President of the Republic of the Philippines

Manila, 12 June 2004

**CCTV 9 interviews Ambassador Gaa**



CCTV 9 Anchor Yang Fuqing interviews Ambassador Gaa on the program, "Asia Today."

On the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and China and RP-China Friendship Day, Ambassador Gaa was interviewed live on CCTV 9's Asia Today on 9 June 2004.

In the short interview with Asia Today's Executive Producer and Anchor Yang Fuqing, the Ambassador noted that Philippines-China relations have grown and expanded from year to year since diplomatic relations were established in 1975. He said the relationship was marked by close friendship, good neighborliness, mutual respect and trust, and active and positive cooperation. He said the two sides are working hard to have more trade, investment and tourism exchanges and cooperation. He also expressed optimism about the future prospects of RP-China relations.

**Embassy hosts National Day Reception**

On the occasion of the 106th anniversary of Philippine Independence Day, Ambassador Willy C. Gaa and wife Linda hosted a reception on 11 June at the Hilton Hotel in Beijing.

Chinese officials who graced the event included Assistant Foreign Minister Shen Guofang and Assistant Minister Chen Fengxiang of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

In his remarks, Ambassador Gaa recalled the heroism of Filipino forefathers and said that the task of nation building continues to be as relevant today as 106 years ago.

Ambassador Gaa also noted that aside from celebrating Philippine Independence, the occasion was also an opportunity to mark the 29th anniversary of Philippines-China diplomatic relations and the third year that both countries celebrated Philippines-China Friendship Day.

Some 200 Chinese officials, members of the diplomatic corps and the Filipino community in Beijing participated in the reception.

On 12 June, Philippine Independence Day, the officers and staff of the Embassy and their families participated in a flag-raising ceremony at the Embassy Grounds. The flag-raising was followed by *Panunumpa sa Watawat* and a Filipino breakfast at the Embassy's Acacia Hall.



Assistant Minister Chen Fengxiang (left) of the Communist Party of China and Assistant Minister Shen Guofang of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were the guests of honor at the reception on 11 June 2004.



Assistant Foreign Minister Shen Guofang (extreme right) with Asian Department Deputy Director-General Guan Mu (3rd from left) and Asian Department Director Hong Liang (2nd from left) at the reception.



Ambassador Willy Gaa with former Chinese Ambassadors to the Philippines Huang Guifang (left) and Guan Dengming (right).



The officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy pose for a group photo before the reception on 11 June 2004 at the Hilton Hotel, Beijing.



Embassy officers, staff and family during the flag-raising ceremony on 12 June 2004 at the Philippine Embassy grounds.

EMBASSY INDEPENDENCE DAY ACTIVITIES

**Independence Day Message  
of H.E. Delia Domingo-Albert  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines**



*Mahal kong kababayan,*

The birth of our nation was marked by the great sacrifice of Filipinos who stood tall in the eyes of history, and those who labored unheralded, past history's unforgiving gaze.

Those who fought for our independence risked it all. Their fortunes, their families, their very lives, were placed on freedom's doorstep. Fueled by their vision of a free and independent nation, propelled by their love for their country, and driven by their faith in the Filipino people, one-hundred and six years ago, they proclaimed to the world, and in the face of destiny, the Philippines, a nation born.

With freedom in their hearts and strength of spirit, a diverse people were united.

That unity has served us well in facing our nation's greatest challenges. We overcame war, lived through superpower confrontation and the threat of global destruction, we bested injustice and the darkest hours of our democracy, and we stood fast in the war against terror, stronger and with greater faith in our nation and in ourselves.

One-hundred and six years ago, from across the

seas and in the capitals of the world, Rizal, Luna, Del Pilar and others like them, by their brilliance and hard work, brought to the world the desire of the Filipino to live free and for the Philippines to stand proudly and with dignity among the community of nations.

Though far from home, they were crucial in uniting our people and in forging a new nation. Though separated by distance, their actions strongly influenced and shaped the future of our young nation.

Today, for the first time, our new heroes are taking a direct hand in shaping the future of our nation. From across the seas, Filipinos have taken the destiny of our nation in their hands and have cast their ballots. From the world's capitals and cities, Filipinos have made their mark by taking part in the historic exercise of choosing their leaders.

The sacrifices of Filipinos overseas and those they left behind, whether a century ago or a century hence, have brought us our freedom and our independence and will serve to inspire all of us in preserving these sacred gains.

*Mabuhay ang Pilipino! Mabuhay ang matatag na Republika ng Pilipinas!*

**Filipino community celebrates Independence Day**

The Filipino community in Beijing celebrated the 106th anniversary of Philippine Independence Day with the traditional *Salu-salu* for the Filipino Community on 13 June and bowling and billiards tournaments on 30 May and 12 June, respectively.

Organized under the theme "*Kalayaan... Lakas at Pagkakaisa; Matatag na Republika Pilipino... ang Galing Mo!*," the *salu-salu* was held at the garden of the Embassy, which was decorated with colorful buntings and umbrellas for the event. Some 225 Filipinos attended the activities.

Filipino priest Fr. Ricky Manalo started the program by celebrating Holy Mass. This was followed by the reading of the Independence Day messages of President Arroyo and and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs by Ambassador Gaa and Consul Jaime Victor Ledda, respectively. Cultural presentations included dances by Embassy ladies and children and members of the Filipino community, and performances by Filipino bands in Beijing.

Winners of the bowling and billiards tournaments were awarded with trophies by Ambassador Gaa.

A sumptuous potluck buffet of delicious Filipino dishes was prepared by both the Embassy and members of the Filipino community.

A special part of the program was the delivery of

speeches in Filipino by two of the Chinese students taking Philippine Studies at the Beijing University. The students, Ms. Rebecca Huang Shurui and Mr. Antonio Shi Hongshang, were the top two winners of a Filipino speech contest held on 8 June at the Beijing University.

More details and photos of the Philippine Independence Day activities are available at the Embassy's website at <http://www.philembassy-china.org/new/remarks.html>.

**Filipino pianist performs in Beijing**



Filipino pianist Adolovni Acosta during the recital.

Some 100 Chinese officials, members of the diplomatic corps and the Filipino community in Beijing were treated to a recital performed by New York-based Filipino pianist Adolovni Acosta at the Embassy's Acacia Hall in the afternoon on 23 June 2004.

Dubbed "Adolovni Acosta Filipino Pianist-A Beijing Recital," the recital included classical pieces by Dolores Paterno, Francisco Buencamino, Sr., Enrique Granados, Frederick Chopin, Isaac Albeniz, and a modern piece by Bo Lawegren.

The recital was Acosta's first performance in China. Acosta is a graduate of the University of the Philippines and the Juilliard School.

The recital was followed by cocktails prepared by Madame Gaa and the Embassy ladies.



Mabuhay Beijing Folk troupe dances tinikling



Ambassador Gaa (center) at the All-Pinoy billiards tournament



Madame Linda Gaa at the bowling tournament



Winners of the bowling tournament



Children's fashion show

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## PROFILE

**Jaime Victor B. Ledda**  
**First Secretary and Consul**

(This is the 18th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats currently serving in China.)



The Embassy welcomes First Secretary and Consul Jaime Victor "Jet" B. Ledda to its corps of officers.

Mr. Ledda, who assumed his post on 25 April 2004, is the Embassy's second highest ranking officer.

Mr. Ledda joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1990 and is a career foreign service officer. He studied in the University of the Philippines in Diliman where he graduated with degrees in political science and law. He was admitted to the Philippine bar in 1989.

Mr. Ledda served in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila from 1990 to 1995 and from 2001 to 2004. He held positions of responsibility in the Office of Legal Affairs, the Board of Foreign Service Administration, the Office of European Affairs, the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration and the Office of Personnel and Administrative Services. During his term in the Home Office, Mr. Ledda joined several Philippine delegations to bilateral negotiations in air services and avoidance of double taxation.

In his first foreign assignment in January 1995, he led the opening of the Philippine Consulate General in Milan where he was designated as Vice Consul. In 1997, he was transferred to the Philippine Embassy and Mission to the European Communities in Brussels with the position of Second Secretary and Consul.

Mr. Ledda participated in ASEAN-sponsored courses on diplomatic studies in Kuala Lumpur and Manila in 1991 and 2002 respectively. He received scholarships to attend the 1992-1993 Foreign Service Program of Oxford University through the British Council and the Academy of International Trade Law in July 2004 under the auspices of the Institute of European Studies in Macau. He has developed a keen interest in air services and public international law.

Mr. Ledda was born in Manila on 30 January 1963 and is married to economist Gina Ledda nee Macatangay.

## New faces



The Embassy welcomes Ms. Neriza Magaso to its corps of consular assistants. Nery used to work at the Office of Consular Affairs of the DFA prior to assuming post in Beijing on 25 May. Ms. Magaso is married to Joey Magaso, who is the Embassy's Property and Records officer.

**Embassy conducts historic absentee voting**

On Easter Sunday, 11 April, the Philippine Embassy in Beijing opened its doors to all registered Filipino voters and conducted the Philippines' first-ever overseas absentee voting in Beijing.

CNN Beijing Bureau Chief Jaime ("Jimi") FlorCruz and wife Ana, the Embassy's web designer, were the first Filipinos in Beijing to exercise their right to vote. It was the couple's first time to participate in Philippine elections. Jimi has been staying in China for almost 33 years. Ana has spent more than 18 years in the People's Republic. Mr. Elmer Hernas, an awardee of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) awardee, was the last person to cast his ballot in Beijing.

In compliance with Republic Act 8189, or the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, the Embassy closed its polling precinct on 10 May, 3:00 p.m., coinciding with the closing of the elections in the Philippines. The Embassy's Special Board of Election Inspectors, mandated under the law to count the ballots, counted the ballots soon after the close of its precinct.

Consul Jaime Victor B. Ledda, the Chair of the Embassy's Special Board of Canvassers, presided over the canvassing of election returns from Beijing,

Xiamen, Guangzhou, and Shanghai. Consul Ledda personally delivered the election returns in Manila on 12 May 2004 for final canvassing of votes by the Philippine Congress for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, and by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) for the senatorial candidates.

The Embassy was open everyday from 11 April to 10 May 2004, to conduct overseas absentee voting. Registration for overseas absentee voting was held within Embassy premises on 01 August to 30 September 2003. Comelec approved 248 of the 260 applications for registration.

Filipinos from Beijing, as well as Tianjin, and Shanxi province, which is about 10 hours by train from Beijing, came to the Embassy to cast their ballots.



CNN Beijing Bureau Chief Jaime FlorCruz signs the Certified list of voters as his wife Ana waits for her turn.

**Ambassador Gaa encourages reform of Chinese language teaching in the Philippines**

Ambassador Willy Gaa called on principals of Chinese-Filipino schools to continue developing their Chinese language teaching methods by undergoing constant training and retooling.

In a speech delivered at the opening ceremony for the Senior Training Seminar for Philippine-Chinese School Principals delivered at the National Academy of Education Administration in Beijing on 21 April 2004, Ambassador Gaa noted that Chinese language education in many Philippine schools have failed to keep up with the changing character of the students they are teaching.

He said that Chinese schools in the Philippines were founded more than a century ago to teach Chinese to the children of Chinese migrants as a first language. However, after more than a century or three generations, the heirs of these Chinese migrants have become integrated into Philippine society. For most of these children, *putonghua* or mandarin is a foreign language. This calls for a change in the methods of teaching and the management of such schools. Ambassador Gaa said that Chinese should now be taught as a foreign language and not as a first language in Philippine Chinese schools. He also said subjects taught in Chinese should now be Filipinoized to make it more relevant to both Chinese Filipinos and Filipinos.

He said that he is heartened that with the help of agencies like the Philippine Chinese Education Research Center and its counterpart Chinese institutions, many of the teachers in Philippine Chinese schools have been retooled or are being retooled.

Ambassador Gaa also expressed the hope that as Philippine Chinese schools rise to the challenge of motivating Chinese Filipinos to learn Chinese, these schools would also share their expertise with other Philippine schools and universities so that more can benefit from this cooperation between the Philippines and China.

**Clarification on authentication and acknowledgment**

The Consular Section of the Embassy has been receiving a number of direct requests for authentication of Chinese legal documents to be used in the Philippines. These include school records of Chinese students wishing to study in the Philippines, and legal documents required by Philippine-based companies.

The Embassy wishes to clarify that pursuant to Section 632 of the 1995 Revised Regulations of the Department of Foreign Affairs, certificates of authentication issued by all Philippine Foreign Service Posts are a verification of notarial or official acts on documents meant to be used in the Philippines, in order to give the service legal force and effect in the Philippines.

As such, the Embassy authenticates documents provided these are first notarized by a notary public in China and authenticated by a consular officer of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A Certificate of Acknowledgment, on the other hand, issued to Filipino citizens who has executed an instrument and personally declares it to be his true and voluntary act and deed before a competent Embassy officer.

**Philippines- China**  
**CHRONICLE**

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Contributions and comments are welcome.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF PHILIPPINES-CHINA RELATIONS

## Senate President Drilon visits China



Senate President Drilon shakes hands with National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo during their meeting in Beijing.

In efforts to promote party-to-party ties, the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) invited Senate President Franklin Drilon and other members of the Liberal Party (LP) to visit Beijing, Chengdu, Guilin and Shenzhen on 6-11 April 2004.

In Beijing, the Senate President held meetings with CPC Minister Wang Jiarui, and National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo.

CPC Minister Wang said that Senate President Drilon's visit represented the first formal links between the LP and the CPC. He noted that the LP is an important party in the ruling coalition, adding that President Arroyo's presidency made "big strides" in the political and economic situation in the country. The Senate President said that he wishes to strengthen party-to-party ties through constant dialogue between leaders of the LP and the CPC.

The two leaders also exchanged views on bilateral relations and the goals and challenges of their respective parties.

Senate President Drilon was accompanied by LP members Senate Majority Floor Leader Francis N. Pangilinan, Batangas Governor Hermilando I. Mandanas, Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza, Mrs. Milagros Drilon and family, and Senate staff.

## Senate President Pro Tempore Flavier visits China



Senator Flavier (5th from left) and his delegation meets with officials of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference at the Great Hall of the People.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan M. Flavier and delegation visited China on 15-23 May 2004 to look into ways of promoting traditional Chinese medicine in the Philippines.

Invited by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Senator Flavier met with CPPCC Vice Chairman Li Zhaozhou; Chairman Sang Guowei of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Health of the National People's Congress (NPC); and Vice Chairman Han Qide of the NPC Standing Committee.

In his meetings, Senator Flavier inquired into China's experience on the legislation of acupuncture practice. Noting the high cost of Western medicine in

the Philippines, the senator said he hoped to introduce legislation on acupuncture practice as this could help bring down the cost of health care in the Philippines.

CPPCC and NPC officials informed the Senator that the Chinese Constitution gives equal importance and status to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Western medicine. They cited the U.S. experience in allowing the legal practice of acupuncture as a model for the Philippines to look into. They also suggested that the Philippines establish a criteria for the practice of acupuncture, and issue certificates for those undergoing training programs on acupuncture.

After the meetings in Beijing, the Senate delegation visited Xi'an on 19-20 May, and Shanghai on 20-23 May.

The trip to China included visits to the China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Institute of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Senator Flavier was accompanied by his wife Mrs. Alma Susana Flavier, son Dr. Jonathan Flavier who is the Senator's adviser on health affairs, and technical staff of the Philippine Senate.

## RP-China trade hits US\$4.7 billion in first five months of 2004

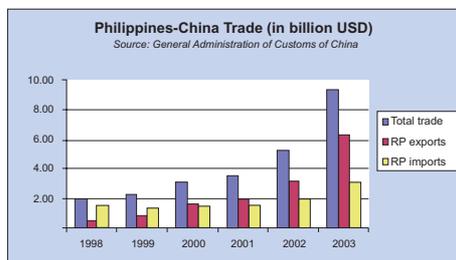
Trade between the Philippines and China reached US\$4.7 billion in the first five months of the year, up 56 percent from the same period in 2003.

According to figures released by the Chinese General Administration of Customs, Philippine exports to China amounted to US\$3.1 billion, while imports from China reached US\$1.6 billion, representing year-on-year increases of 59 and 50 percentages, respectively. The Philippines posted a trade surplus of US\$1.5 billion.

Top Philippine exports include semi-conductor

devices, storage units, copper cathodes, parts and accessories of machines, fuel oils, petroleum naphtha, fresh bananas, and crude coconut oil.

RP-China trade has been growing at a rate of 38 percent in the past five years. In 2003, trade volume reached an unprecedented US\$9.4 billion.



## RP reduces visa fees for Chinese tour groups

In February 2004, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed the Executive Order No. 288, reducing visa fees specifically for the Chinese tourist.

The visa fee for tour groups from China and Hong Kong SAR with at least twenty (20) members is now only RMB 150 per member, down from RMB 250.

To attract more Chinese tourists to visit the Philippines, Philippine posts in China have simplified visa procedures and reduced visa fees twice in the last three years.

## Amb. Gaa promotes tourism in Chengdu

Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa made a pitch to attract tourists from Sichuan Province to the Philippines when he spoke at the Southeast Asia Culture and Tourism Promotion Symposium in Chengdu on 26 May 2004.

At the symposium, Ambassador Gaa invited the people of landlocked Sichuan to visit the fine beaches of the Philippines. He identified Cebu and Boracay as ideal destinations for relaxation for Sichuanese.

In Chengdu, Ambassador Gaa also met with Sichuan Vice Governor Jiang Jufeng during which the former noted the crucial role played by Sichuan in the development of China's western regions. Both noted that economic and cultural relations between the two sides are growing. The Philippines' Cebu Pacific started chartered flights between Chengdu and Manila in May. Philippine super malls pioneer SM is constructing a branch in Chengdu.

The Symposium was part of the 5th Western China International Economy and Trade Fair.

## Chinese tourists to RP increase 33%

Some 19,169 Chinese tourists visited the Philippines in the first half of the year, up 33 percent from the same period in 2003.

The figure makes China the 11th largest source of tourists for the Philippines. However, at 1.7 percent, the figure continues to occupy a small percentage of total tourist arrivals to the Philippines.

Last year, partly because of the outbreak of SARS, only 32,000 Chinese tourists visited the Philippines. This year, the Philippines hopes to double the figure.

The USA, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan are the largest sources of tourist arrivals to the Philippines.

## Amb. Gaa observes efforts in poverty reduction

Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa participated in field visits to Quzhou and Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province on 14-16 April organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group. The field visits aimed to orient participants in the projects of IFC to enhance private sector contribution to poverty reduction efforts in the erstwhile "poor" province.

## Amb. Gaa promotes RP trade

At the Hezhou-ASEAN Promotion Seminar, held on 29 April in Beijing, Philippine Ambassador to China Willy C. Gaa invited the people of Hezhou to enhance trade exchanges between the city and the Philippines.