

## Green Philippine passports no longer valid by 2010

by DYMPHNA CALICA-LA PUTT  
AJPress

FILIPINO citizens holding green Philippine passports will no longer be able to use these travel documents in most countries by April next year.

As such, the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles has started accepting applications for machine-readable passports (MRPs), which is the new official travel document required by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

It will even be much easier for residents of

Las Vegas to apply for MRPs, since consular officers will hold a consular outreach in the valley in May to facilitate applications in the area.

"A team from the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles will be conducting a Consular Outreach Program in Las Vegas, NV on 23-24 May 2009," the Consulate said a statement released last April 8.

The Philippine Consular Office in Los Angeles has jurisdiction over Southern

Nevada, Southern California, Texas and Arizona. The Consulate normally requires Filipino citizens living in these areas to do consular transactions in person. MRP applicants, in particular, need to apply in person at the California office.

The new maroon-colored MRP has a "machine readable zone" containing the personal data of the passport holder that can be read by a machine or computer. At the

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## United Nations Committee cites RP as model for best practices in migration policy

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for assisting workers in the midst of the global economic crisis

Prasad Kariyawasam, former Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York and former chairman of the CMW, also echoed El Jamri's statement as he pointed out that as "we hold you in that higher threshold," the Philippines can serve as a model for other migrant-sending countries.

The Philippines was again congratulated for its successful chairmanship of the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD-2) held in October 2008 in Manila, where President Arroyo made a pitch for the universality of the ICRMW. This call was reiterated by the Philippines in the on-going Durban Review Conference in Geneva.

The CMW members also called on the Philippines to maintain its activist engagement in the GFMD, Bali Process, Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Process, and other regional and international forums that focused on migrant worker issues and concerns and where the Philippines has always taken the lead in advancing migrant worker rights and migrant protection worldwide.

The CMW members thanked the Philippines for the depth and comprehensiveness of its reports and answers to the Committee, and welcomed the size and quality of the Philippine delegation as a concrete manifestation of country's serious commitment to the ICRMW.

Ambassador Erlinda F. Basilio, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva led the Philippine delegation which included Undersecretary Severo S. Catura, executive director; Presidential Human Rights Committee; DILG Undersecretary Melchor P. Rosales; DSWD Undersecretary Alicia R. Bala; and officials from the Office of the Executive Secretary, DOLE, DILG, POEA, OWWA, DOJ, NCRFW, DFA and the Geneva Permanent Philippine U.N. Mission, who interacted in detailed discussions with CMW members with CMW members.

In her opening statement before the CMW, Basilio reiterated that "the Philippine government has always championed the rights of migrant workers and their families in all fora in firm recognition of the significant role and contribution of all migrant workers," underscoring the fact that the Philippines began implementing its own protective Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (RA 8042) even before the ICRMW came into force.

The Ambassador also outlined the firm actions the Philippine government has taken to assist Filipino workers at home and abroad who have been adversely affected by the current global economic crisis and the progress that is being made against illegal recruitment.

It was noted that, from 2007 to 2008, the POEA Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch obtained twelve convictions of POEA illegal recruitment endorsed and/or monitored cases. In 2008, a total of 318 illegal recruitment cases endorsed to the prosecution offices for the conduct of preliminary investigations, caused the arrest of 98 suspected illegal recruiters, conducted a total of 54 operations/ entrapment proceedings and resulted to the closure of 10 establishments confirmed to be engaged in illegal recruitment. ([www.gov.ph](http://www.gov.ph))



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