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ATTY. MICHAEL GURFINKEL

A Mother's Day greeting

MOTHER'S Day is a time when everyone should reflect on all the wonderful things and the sacrifices their mothers have made for them. It is also the time when Mothers feel blessed with the gift of motherhood, and feel the indescribable joy of being surrounded by their children.

Unfortunately, for some mothers who are in the US in illegal status, Mother's Day is not such a happy time. Instead, it is a time of sadness and emptiness. Many Filipina mothers come to me for consultation, and share the same sad story of the sacrifices they

have made for the sake of their children: They were forced to leave their young children behind in the Philippines, for a chance to give them a better future, to be able to send them to good schools, for their food, clothes, and education.

And yet these mothers would do anything just to be with their children again. Now that these mothers are settled in this foreign land of America, they want to concentrate on bringing their family here in the United States: to be able to hug and hold them, and share with their children every single moment of happiness, triumph, and success.

Every mother who had to leave their children in the care of relatives or friends goes through unimaginable loneliness and anxiety, as they work endless hours to provide a better life for their fam-

ily back home in the Philippines. The need and desire to provide a better future for their children ironically cause untold suffering for both the mother who left, and the children left behind.

The mother comes home from work, finding an empty house, devoid of the love and laughter of her children. She calls her children, especially during important occasions, such as Christmas Day, New Year's Day, birthdays, graduations, sharing with them the happiness of the occasion. But as soon as the mother puts down the phone, the joy fades, and the pain of separation becomes even more deep. She sees friends' children, and remembers her own children back home.

The children who are left behind, on the other hand, grow up without the love, care and guidance of a loving mother. True, they are able to go to the best schools, buy clothes, and eat good meals every day, but all they really

want is to be with "Mommy."

Every time I go to the Philippines, I see Filipinos who can buy their clothes and food because many of them have mothers, or fathers, or children who are working abroad, sending them dollars for their upkeep. But behind their capacity to buy material things, lies that empty feeling caused by the absence of their parents or children.

I have had the privilege of seeing many mothers and children reunited in America, and I can tell you that there is no better joy in knowing that they can continue pursuing better opportunities together without being away from each other again. There have been many joyful reunions between mothers and children that I am happy and proud to have been a part of.

It's Mother's Day again this Sunday, and I continue to look forward to helping more mothers get their ultimate Mother's Day

wish—to be with their children again.

For some mothers in the United States, the wait for the magical reunion with their children seems endless. Because of their lack of immigration status, they must spend year after year away from their children. I hope that they are doing something to legalize their status, so that they can spend Mother's Day and other important holidays with their children in the future.

On this Mother's Day, I send my love and greetings to my own mother, who was an immigrant herself, who left her country, family and friends to look for a better life in America. I am very much able to understand what my clients have gone through, since my parents were immigrants and they have gone through the same experiences as my clients. Special greetings go to my Filipina mother-in-law, whom I call "Nanay". Most of all, to the

mothers who made the supreme sacrifice of separation, for the sake of their own children.

To all the mothers of the world, Happy Mother's Day!!!

Michael J. Gurfinkel is licensed, and an active member of the State Bar of California and New York. All immigration services are provided by, or under the supervision of, an active member of the State Bar of California.

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RP to cut borrowings

by IRIS C. GONZALES
Philstar.com

MANILA—The Philippines will reduce its borrowings given its huge debt and will boost its tax collection efforts despite the difficult economic tide, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said May 7.

Teves made the assurance after United Kingdom-based Fitch Ratings warned of a credit rating downgrade if the government is not able to boost its revenues and change its fiscal strategy.

"We agree with Fitch that we need increased revenues to enable us to continue providing for the needs of our people as we cannot rely heavily on borrowings given our huge debt stock," the Finance chief said.

Fitch affirmed its BB rating for the country's long-term foreign currency-denominated issuances, the BB+ rating on the country's peso-denominated long-term debt papers, the B short-term issuer default rating and the BB+ country ceiling. It also maintained the country's 'stable' outlook.

A rating of BB by Fitch is speculative and below investment

grade. This means that there is an elevated vulnerability to default risk while a B rating is considered highly speculative. It is also below investment grade.

However, Fitch also warned that unless the government steps up its revenue collections, its faces a possible credit rating downgrade.

"If forecast increases in spending are not reversed once the economy begins to recover, or revenue collection is not stepped up considerably, there is a risk that Philippine government debt ratios may deviate further from the BB medians, with possible negative rating implications," Fitch said.

In response, Teves said the government would intensify tax collection efforts through various action plans of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

"We will continue to work closely with Congress for the passage of proposed revenue enhancement measures given the urgent need to increase government revenues," he said. ■

Quezon City among top destinations for new businesses



Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr.

QUEZON CITY is making progress in its effort to become one of the country's most vibrant destinations for doing business.

With infrastructure development steadily building up along with more and more inputs getting in place for a better business climate, executives of different

business process outsourcing (BPO) firms noted that Quezon City now maintains a competitive edge in the regional as well as global levels of these industries.

"Quezon City is selling itself good," they said during a meeting entitled, *Future Perfect Cybercity: Merging Efforts Towards ICT Growth*.

Aside from smart infrastructure projects and ease in setting up business in the city, other factors considered by the participants are the presence of an intensive labor pool, improved peace and order and support of the local government.

"The city government considers it imperative to improve the general framework of doing business in Quezon City to give potential investors that sense of feeling "that they could do their business here without knowing anybody in the city hall," said Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (*Philstar.com*)

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BUSINESS

Quote of the Week

"While the Philippines has not been directly exposed to some of the most serious aspects of the international financial crisis, including, for example, severe stresses affecting the domestic banking system, it is not impervious to the deterioration in global economic growth prospects."

—James McCormack, Head of Asia Sovereigns at Fitch, said in a report released May 6