

US Filipino citizens urged to participate in choosing next RP president

by DYMPHNA CALICA-LA PUTT
AJPress

THE Philippine government is urging Filipino citizens living in the United States to participate in choosing the next Philippine president in the national elections in May 2010.

Consular offices in the US will make voter registration even easier for Filipinos by holding several consular outreach programs throughout the country this year.

"The right to vote is a constitutionally-guaranteed right that should be exercised by any Filipino during elections," Philippine Consulate General Los Angeles (PCG LA) Vice Consul General John Reyes told *Asian Journal*.

"Therefore, it is every Filipino's bounden duty to register and vote and be part in this very important process of selecting our nation's leaders," he added.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said earlier that it is targeting one million Filipinos to participate in overseas absentee voting (OAV) in preparation for the 2010 presidential elections in the country.

"That's why we are urging all Filipinos abroad to register now. This is an opportunity to choose our leaders. This is also our duty," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said in a recent interview in Manila, Philippines.

OAV was made into law in 2003 through Republic Act 9225 or the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act. Under this law, Filipinos who have re-acquired their Filipino citizenship can participate in Philippine elections via OAV.

Similarly, the law allows Filipino citizens living abroad to participate in elections in the Philippines even without going back to

the country. With OAV, ballots are sent to voters by mail. Voters need to mail the ballots back to the Consulate where he or she registered.

This is the third OAV registration for overseas Filipinos after the law was passed in 2003 in time for the 2004 Philippine presidential elections. Registration period this year, for the 2010 elections, started last February and will end in August.

"All OAV registrants during this period can vote for the president and vice president, 12 senators, and party list representatives during the May 2010 general elections," PCG LA Vice Consul Reyes also said in the interview.

Consular outreach programs will be initiated by PCG LA on May 16th in Panorama City, CA; in Las Vegas, NV on May 23rd and 24th; in Walnut CA on May 30th; and in Chandler, AZ on July 18th.

This consular office has jurisdiction over the areas of Southern Nevada, Southern California, Texas and Arizona.

For its part, the Philippine Consulate General New York (PCG NY) will hold outreach programs in Rochester, NY on May 16th; in Philadelphia, PA on July 11th and in Massachusetts on July 18th.

PCG NY covers Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Both NY and LA consular offices have been trying to reach out to more Filipino voters via outreach programs in their respective jurisdictions. This is to make registration faster and more convenient for Filipinos.

These two consular posts have the highest

turnout of OAV registrants in the US since registration started in February.

While voter registration during outreach programs is free, registrants may be asked to make appointments via fax or e-mail.

PCG LA, in particular, has asked Filipinos to download forms from their website and have these ready during registration at the outreach sites. They need to make appointments online and view the appointment schedule on the website.

US-based Filipinos need to register in the consular office that has jurisdiction in the area where they reside.

Those residing in the areas of Northern California, Northern Nevada, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming need to register at the Philippine Consulate San Francisco.

Filipinos in Midwest states namely Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Wisconsin are covered by Philippine Consulate Chicago.

Those living in Hawaii, American Samoa, Kiribati, Tonga, French Polynesia, meanwhile are under the jurisdiction of Philippine Consulate Honolulu.

The Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC, meanwhile, has jurisdiction over Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Complete schedule of voter registration hours and outreach programs in these consular offices can be viewed in their respective websites. ■

RP is ok thus far, says 'New York Times'

PAGE A1 ◀

count for 10 percent of GDP and the bulk of its foreign exchange earnings.

Though remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are expected to weaken from \$16 billion in 2008, the remittances have held up well thus far.

A second bright spot—in contrast with the woes of the Asian electronics manufacturing sectors—is in call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) which should keep growing, albeit more slowly, it said.

Business outsourcing absorbs some educated labor but does little for the unskilled, the NYT article said.

Another boost will come from government spending in badly needed infrastructure, health and education which have been made possible by stabilizing fiscal position over several years that brought interest rates and the cost of debt servicing down, it added.

Even agriculture, long a drag on the economy, has been achieving steady growth of 3 percent a

year with increased investment and higher prices, the NYT reported.

In his article, Bowring said the bottomline in the Philippines' good economic performance is that it did not depend on export manufacturing, which, however, was also a weakness in that the country failed to use its abundant labor force.

Industry accounted for only 33 percent of output and has been declining for three decades. Philippine infrastructure is poor because of low budget revenues and the dominance of a few big groups in its commercial life has become a disincentive, the NYT report said.

It said that Philippine labor will continue to be sought overseas—particularly in East Asia, which is aging fast. The country may be able to build on gains in fiscal stability and balance of payments equilibrium.

Remittances will remain less vulnerable than manufactured exports to global developments, it said. ■

GMA names Pacquiao...

PAGE A1 ◀

boxer on his fight against Ricky Hatton.

Pacquiao arrived at the Palace grounds at 10:45am in a motorcade and was met by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

He was then escorted to the Music Room where he was received by Mrs. Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Pacquiao was also presented by Palace chefs with a 28-pound chocolate cake that had a candy replica of his belt as decoration.

After several minutes, Mrs. Arroyo, Pacquiao and his entourage proceeded to the Rizal Hall for a brief program that was followed by a luncheon.

Ermita read the proclamation declaring a National Day of Celebration for Pacquiao's victory.

During the program, Mrs. Arroyo interviewed Pacquiao, who said that he thought Hatton was "bigger and stronger" as the latter's trainer claimed before the fight. ■

Filipina to accomplish this but also the first Southeast Asian woman."

Seasoned marathon runner Joe Matias says even ultra runners aren't willing to do what Rojas is doing.

"It takes a different breed of people to do something like this," said Joe Matias, who is helping coordinate runners nationwide to pace with Rojas along the way. Rojas knows her run is difficult.

She admits of not being the most talented runner in the world.

But she said her biggest attribute is her stubbornness to finish a project.

Her first stop will be Las Vegas. Crisanto said that it would take about two weeks.

To follow Joy Rojas or donate to the cause, visit www.thepoc.net/index.php/Takbong-Pangarap/ (Joseph Pimentel)

Pinay to run across America

PAGE A1 ◀



Takbong Pangarap kicks off.

AJPress Photo by Andy Tecson

Pangarap" or "dream run" has been a lifelong dream.

"For some strange reason I was dreaming of running across the United States, and now I'm here so there must be a reason why I'm here," said Rojas, who is donating proceeds from the run to the anti-tuberculosis program in the Philippines and the Philippines Heart Center. "You know so you just have to go for it. Not everybody has this privilege of being able to do this so just go for it."

And she's going for it.

For the next four months, she'll be running an average of one

marathon a day.

During the three thousand mile trek, she'll encounter elevation that can go as high as 8,000-feet and weather that may reach over 100 degrees.

Takbong Pangarap Events Director Chuck Crisanto said that only 200 people have successfully ran across the US.

"Well the difficulty can be compared to climbing Mt. Everest. Climbing the top is 8 kilometers vertical, running across the US is 5,000 kilometers horizontal," said Crisanto. "When Joy completes this run, she'll not only be the first



REEVES & ASSOCIATES

A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION

The Leading & Most Trusted Immigration Law Firm in the U.S.



THE FIRM'S PARTNERS

* CHOSEN BY THEIR PEERS AS SUPER LAWYERS FOR 2006, 2007, 2008 AND 2009

15 Attorneys Devoted Exclusively to the Practice of Immigration Law It Doesn't Have to Cost More to Hire the Very Best.

free in-office
consultation

(800) 795-8009
www.reeves.com

LOS ANGELES

SAN FRANCISCO

LAS VEGAS

MANILA