

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

Message from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

TODAY is a day of remembrance and renewal.

We remember the heroism and sacrifice of our forebears who laid the foundations for the establishment of Asia's first Republic in 1898.

This is a democratic legacy which we—as a state and as a nation—should rightly be proud of and strive to further strengthen.

Likewise, we renew the pledge to continue doing our part in building a more peaceful, progressive and prosperous Philippines.

The Philippines has advanced steadily towards greater growth, guided by a common vision for a better shared future and powered by the sinew and might of the hardworking and dedicated Filipino.

As we commemorate the 111th Anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence, the theme "Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan," underscores the challenges to and the responsibilities of our generation to bring to full fruition the ideals that animated our forefathers' noble efforts.

These are values that resonate with relevance for the global Filipino nation—bound as we are by a common heritage and shared aspirations.

I thank the Filipino-American community for your demonstrated commitment to help uphold, protect and promote our Filipino heritage; I am confident that you will continue to do your part in contributing to the full development of your motherland.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas at ang diwa ng kalayaan! Mabuhay ang sambayang Pilipino!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Philippines



Message from Alberto G. Romulo

WE remember with profound gratitude the gallantry and bravery of our forebears who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that our nation and people can enjoy the freedom and sovereignty we rightly deserve.

The Philippine flag that was unfurled in Kawit, Cavite in 1898 soars proudly today for all to see, standing on the strong foundations of our Republic: a country governed by law, strengthened by democratic ideals and continuously reinvigorated by a free, involved and empowered people.

We have gone a long way as a democracy; and we have a further way to go still as we pursue greater peace, progress and prosperity for our nation.

Our commemoration of the 111th Anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence underscores our duty to honor the memory of those who came before us and to ensure that those who will come after us will continue to enjoy the full promise of our democracy.

This year's theme, "Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan" challenges us all to do our utmost—to harness our individual and collective talents and abilities—in the service of our growing global nation.

The Filipino-American community—with whom the Philippines is bound by common values, shared heritage and mutual aspirations—continues to be our partner for growth.

I laud your sustained efforts to gain a deeper understanding of our heritage and to contribute to the Philippines' full development.

In doing so, you continue to build on the democratic legacy of and bring honor to our forefathers.

Mabuhay ang diwa ng Kalayaan!
Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!
Mabuhay ang Sambayanang Pilipino!
Alberto G. Romulo
Secretary of Foreign Affairs



Message from Willy C. Gaa

WITH gratitude in our heart, we commemorate the 111th anniversary of the Philippine Independence with the renewed resolve to bring to full fruition the aspirations of our nation's forebears.

This year's theme, "Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan" reminds Filipinos around the world of the continuing challenge for our nation's people to do our utmost and contribute to the further strengthening of our Republic.

Our forefathers envisioned a sovereign and democratic country governed by an accountable government and moved by an involved and empowered citizenry.

We have made great strides towards greater peace, progress and prosperity. And we will continue moving forward, propelled by the collective commitment of the global Filipino nation.

Filipinos in the United States and the Filipino-American community continue to be the Philippines' partners.

I commend the sustained efforts to learn more about Filipino heritage and to contribute to the Philippines' growth and development.

The many achievements of Filipinos here in the United States are an inspiration to Filipinos throughout the world.

With this demonstrated commitment, our nation and our posterity can be confident that the democratic legacy of our forefathers will continue to live on and that the fruits of our democracy will be enjoyed by all Filipinos.

Mabuhay ang diwa ng Kalayaan! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!
Mabuhay ang Sambayanang Pilipino!

Willy C. Gaa
Ambassador



Outrage vs constituent assembly on Facebook

by NINA CATHERINE CALLEJA
Inquirer.net

FACEBOOK addicts are gearing up to give the constituent assembly a thrashing.

Thousands of people converged on Makati's financial district last June 10, a similar movement has started in cyberspace sd erll.

Around 13,000 Facebook users have signed up for a campaign in the popular social networking Web site Facebook to oppose and condemn the resolution by the House of Representatives calling for a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution even without Senate participation, said Manolo Benavent, an Internet and Facebook user.

Benavent, who attended a meeting of the organizers of the multi-sectoral rally, put up the cause campaign titled *Stop Con-Ass Now!* on June 3 through Facebook.

He said a booth would be set up in Makati to gather Facebook members joining the protest.

Benavent said that because up to 2,000 Facebook users were signing up each day, he expected the Facebook campaign to reach the 100,000 mark this Friday.

"There's an exponential growth [in the number] of people opposing Con-ass in cyberspace," Benavent told the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The Facebook cause campaign, Benavent said, was an offshoot of the Facebook eyeball vs Con-ass, a meet-up of Facebook users last Friday to discuss the pros and cons of the constituent assembly.

"We aim to put all the statements about Cha-cha [Charter change] and Con-Ass [constituent assembly] in one page," he said.

He said he was encouraging the members to invite their Facebook contacts every day to join the cause.

The cause campaign, Benavent said, has members among call center agents and government

employees who could not "physically attend the rally" but wish to do something.

"This is our parliamentary move on the Internet," he said, explaining that if the House denied the people a public hearing, the Internet users will speak out through cyber forums.

He added that people were outraged because what the House did was a "mockery of democracy."

"We were taught in history class that the Congress is composed of the lower house and the Senate. How come a House-only Con-Ass is possible?" he said.

The Facebook cause campaign serves as a medium to educate Internet users about the constituent assembly. The complete list of congressmen who signed the resolution was uploaded on the site, so that viewers would not vote for them again in the coming elections, Benavent said.

Many facebook users would

also first ask about the House resolution before joining the cause.

Benavent said that a Facebook user normally has 200 friends, and if he or she invited half of his contacts, the campaign would trigger a ripple effect.

In the last two years, the Internet, through social networking sites, has been a powerful platform for launching a cause.

During the last "People Power" anniversary, Internet users and bloggers launched Edsa Wave 1.0 as a new EDSA Revolution to call for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. ■

14 senators go abroad

by CHRISTINA MENDEZ
Philstar.com

AMID the global threat of the Influenza A(H1N1) virus, 14 senators have left for abroad, taking the opportunity to go on vacation or attend official functions during the congressional break.

Among the vacationing lawmakers, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid is going to spend the entire one and a half months in the US.

Senate sources revealed Lapid, who has not been very active in the Senate sessions, left for the US last June 5, the very day that Congress went on *sine die* adjournment.

Lapid would be returning on July 26, two days before Congress resumes session on July 28.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon is also leaving for the United Kingdom on July 4 to return on July 12.

Senators Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero and Richard Gordon would also fly to the US.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is going on a tour of five countries. He is scheduled to go to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, France, and Greece from June 8 to June 12.

Estrada also filed a travel authority before the Senate's Office of International Relations and Protocol for a trip to the United Kingdom from July 4 to 12.

For his part, Sen. Panfilo Lacson is on a trip to the United Kingdom from July 1 to 12, along with fellow Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Honasan is also going to Paris and Hong Kong from July 4 to 19.

From June 13 to July 4, Sen. Loren Legarda would be flying to Geneva, Switzerland and Berlin, Germany while Sen. Jamby Madrigal is going to India from June 12 to 20.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan left for Canada last June 5. His travel authority is until June 18.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. is scheduled to join the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Switzerland on June 24.

Pimentel said he is returning on July 23.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. is in the

US from June 5 to 11 while Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri is leaving for the US on June 10 until July 3. Zubiri is also flying to the UK between July 4 to 12. ■

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Take these steps to reduce your risk:

- Avoid bites by applying insect repellent to exposed skin when mosquitoes are present. When possible, wear long sleeves, long pants and socks. Peak mosquito hours are at dusk and dawn.
- Clean out mosquito breeding grounds on your property by draining standing water. Install or repair screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Report dead birds, "green" swimming pools and mosquito problems to the health district.

Mosquito Control Hotline
(702) 759-1220

Online Complaint Form and Mosquito Information
www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org/mosquito_control/index.htm

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