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# US Assistance to RP increased in new proposal

**F**OREIGN Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo welcomed the report from Ambassador Willy Gaa in Washington DC on increased amounts to be dedicated to the Philippines in the proposed FY 2010 US government budget. President Obama submitted the budget to the US Congress last May 7.

In the proposed budget, an estimated total amount of US\$667 million is to be allocated to the Philippines. The amount represents a substantial increase from previous years and can be taken as a reflection of the appreciation and value the Obama Administration gives to the strategic Philippines-US partnership.

"At this difficult time of ongoing economic crisis in the US and the intense pressures on the US budget to support domestic recovery efforts, the increase in foreign assistance is a sure sign of continuing US commitment to support peace and development efforts in the Philippines. Our partnership is growing stronger and this has benefited not only our country but also the region," Secretary Romulo stated.

Development assistance, defense and

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Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo



Ambassador Willy Gaa



## US Filipino citizens urged to participate in choosing next RP president

**T**HE 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

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## The upside of a downturn

Asian American business leaders gather at CelebrAsian '09 to provide roadmap to opportunities

by MOMAR G. VISAYA  
AJPress



Susan Au Allen, national president and CEO of the USPAACC Education Foundation

AJPress Photo by Momar G. Visaya

**N**EW YORK—America is on the verge as it is now facing an economic downturn never before seen, with some people comparing it with the era of the Great Depression.

While some people may feel down and out, others see the promise. They look at the economic crisis as a fountain of growth areas where smart businesses can convert this threat into an opportunity.

This is what the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce (USPAACC) aims to fulfill as it is set to stage next week CelebrAsian '09, the

largest Asian American business opportunity conference in the United States.

"It is bad, but it is not that bad," remarked Susan Au Allen, national president and CEO of the USPAACC Education Foundation at a press briefing for the Asian American media held at the Time Warner Center Wednesday, May 13. "Asian American businesses have an opportunity to expand their markets through President Obama's economic stimulus plan, and they will learn about it at the conference," she added.

The conference, slated for May 20-22, aims to find out the

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

**T**HE Philippines, which lagged behind its more economically progressive neighbors in Asia in previous years, is now outperforming most of its East and Southeast Asian neighbors, and will continue to make headway at least for a couple more years.

This assessment appeared in the *New York Times* which cited the Philippines for its improved economic management amid the global crisis.

The article, written by Philip Bowring, said the Philippines' expects a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 2 to 3 percent this year—a rate superior to its East Asian peers except China and Vietnam, and a sharp contrast to the negative growths elsewhere.

The Philippines registered an average growth rate of 4.5 percent in the past seven years.

The *New York Times* said the relatively

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## Government moves closer to national ID system

**M**ANILA—A national identification system is in the offing.

The Social Security System (SSS) is leading other government agencies in drawing up guidelines for a unified ID

and is starting the bidding for its manufacture.

Romulo Neri, SSS president and chief executive officer, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Rey Aquino, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) president and chief executive officer; Jaime Fabi-

ana, Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) officer-in-charge; and Winston Garcia, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) president and general manager, for this purpose.

### DATELINE PHILIPPINES

The four agencies have agreed

to pool funds to start bidding out the contract for the production of a unified ID, with the SSS as the lead agency in conducting the bid.

Launched last year, the Unified Multi-Purpose ID System (UMID) requires all government agencies and

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## 'Emong's' rampage a wake-up call

Typhoon hits Northern Luzon, leaves trail of destruction

by GABRIEL CARDINOZA  
Inquirer.net

**M**AYOR NESTOR Pulido of Anda, Pangasinan, knew that Typhoon "Emong," like the few typhoons that had originated from the South China Sea in the past, would somehow affect his island town when it moved closer to shore last May 7.

Pulido thought of the small fishermen in his town's coastal villages, who might not have anything to eat if they wouldn't be able to go fishing because of huge waves and strong winds spawned by the typhoon.

He directed the town's social welfare and development officer to stockpile on relief goods for fishermen who might be displaced by "Emong."

In neighboring Bolinao, Mayor Alfonso Celeste knew that his town was in the direct path of the typhoon. Immediately, he ordered the municipal disaster coordinating council to prepare evacuation centers, food and transporta-

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