

# Group debuts 'TelePresence' in RP

PLDT teams up with Cisco, Tata Comms

by ANNA VLAMERO  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—The Philippine Long Distance Co. (PLDT) partnered with Cisco and Tata Communications to bring the first commercial telepresence technology in the country, officials said.

Telepresence combines high-definition video conferencing technology with spatial audio conferencing. It offers life-like, face-to-face virtual meetings for users, according to Stephen Thomas Misa, country manager of Cisco Philippines.

Nerissa Ramos, first vice-president and head for PLDT's corporate business group, said the country's first public telepresence studio—and the ninth worldwide—would be opened in PLDT's Makati office, followed

by two more rooms in Cebu and Davao by end of the year.

Christoffer Steffens, Tata Communications director for public telepresence, said the PLDT public telepresence studio would be connected to Tata Comms' global network of public rooms in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Gurgaon in India; Boston in the United States and London in the United Kingdom.

Pioneer global provider of Cisco TelePresence Tata Communications plans to establish and connect up to 100 public telepresence rooms globally by end of 2009. This in addition to over 300 private studios, added Steffens.

Steffens revealed plans to connect the existing private telep-

presence networks in education, technology and government offices.

An area of growth for telepresence is telemedicine or remote diagnostics, Steffens added.

Misa added PLDT's public studio would be connected to the public Cisco Telepresence Suite in Santa Clara, California.

PLDT, which is the exclusive local provider of the service, said the telepresence offering comes in two flavors: Public Studio Telepresence and Private Managed Telepresence.

The PLDT Public Studio Telepresence is a 24-hour, pay-per-use service. The service would be tailored fit for organizations that hold meetings and for Overseas Filipino workers wanting to hold

virtual reunions, said Ramos.

The Private Managed Telepresence is a fully managed service, which includes a high-speed bandwidth facility ideal for organizations that require always-on collaboration with counterparts abroad, said Ramos.

A screen for projecting life-like sizes of two persons requires at least 10 megabits per second of connection to enable the service, said Misa. A telepresence studio could handle six to 18 people, he added.

Instead of traveling abroad for business meetings, corporations now have an option to meet with clients in telepresence rooms. This could save them up to \$260 million spent on annual travel costs. ■

# BPO industry to survive crisis, says RP firms

by ERIKA TAPALLA  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry gleams with hope during times of crisis, according to Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI).

"While the IT (information and technology) sector has been hit, the BPO sector is surviving," said Edgardo Lacson, PCCI president, during a forum Wednesday.

Lacson cited that at least 70,000 employees were laid off in the Calabar region (Calamba, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal) due to the closing of Philippine operations of companies like Intel, Panasonic, and soon, Fujitsu.

"These IT jobs are type of jobs that are permanently lost. But BPO should be explored. There are two types: one is voice and the other is non-voice; it is the non-voice that should be looked into," Lacson told *Inquirer.net*.

Voice-type BPO services involve answering queries regarding products and product concerns, as well as telemarketing. Non-voice type BPO services encompass engineering design, legal and medical transcription, design, animation, software development, among others.

"Retail in the US has gone down so voice type went down as well. There is a rise in the non-voice type of industry because



of the European entry as well as President Obama's stimulus package providing more jobs in this sector," said Lacson.

Apart from BPOs, Lacson cited the knowledge process outsourcing that the organization is pushing.

"By providing our services, we are 'Filipinizing' the international community, strengthening our economy as well," he said.

Lacson said Filipinos should change their mindset when it comes to offering their services.

"Filipinos should take pride in their work. You go anywhere around the world and street sweepers, garbage collectors, nannies, they are all proud of what they do. Mga Pilipino masyadong diploma-based ang mentality [Filipinos have a diploma-based mentality] and that has to change. Find dignity in what you do and be proud of it," Lacson said. ■

# Spider 'sumo' makes appearance in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—Spiders can bridge the cultural gap between Filipinos and Japanese in this city.

Wanting to strengthen ties with residents here, the Japanese Association in Northern Luzon Inc. (JANL) staged for the first time last March 27 a "sumo match" between spiders to mark Baguio's centennial.

Twenty-two children gathered in

Brgy. Loakan here and unleashed their prized spider fighters.

**1st spider fight**  
Hidenibu Oguni, JANL president, expressed gratitude to residents, especially the children, who supported what he called "the first official spider fighting contest in the Philippines."

Since February, Oguni and the Japanese community have been preparing for the city's centen-

nial in September. They came up with the spider-fighting tournament to promote the common game.

The spider sumo was also a part of an ongoing international study by Japanese scientists.

The Arachnological Society of Japan sent spider expert Mikio Sekine to the Phils. to observe spider fighting. "He came here to learn about spiders from you.

Please teach him about your spiders," Oguni said as he introduced Sekine.

**400-year-old**  
Since last year, he has been surveying spider fighting in universities outside Japan but without much success.

"In my survey, spider fighting is only done in Japan and in the Philippines," Sekine said through an interpreter. (*Inquirer.net*)

# PGMA to launch joint government-youth project to focus attention on need to protect ecosystem

TAGBILARAN CITY—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will launch (Wednesday), April 1 the *Sama-sama Para sa Kalikasan*, a joint government and youth environmental project to focus national attention on the urgent need to protect the world's ecosystem from the catastrophic consequences of global warming.

An undertaking of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) under the President's Green Philippines agenda, the "Sama-sama Para sa Kalikasan" will be launched at the Bohol Wisdom School gym.

To welcome the President are some 4,500 SK members and local officials led by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, Tagbilaran City Mayor Dan Lim, Bohol 1st District Rep. Edgardo Chatto, 2nd District Rep. Roberto Cajés, 3rd District Rep. Adam Nelson Jala, SK National Federation President Jane Cajés, SK Secretary General Patrick Bench Marco, and SK VP for Visayas Karl Giuseppe Gumban.

Expected to accompany the President are Labor Secretary Mariano Roque and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairman Emmanuel Angeles.

The launch of the *Sama-sama Para sa Kalikasan* project will highlight the three-day SK national directorate meeting (March 31-April 2) here.

The SK is scheduled to present to the President their support for the Green Philippines project by way of planting trees, coastal cleanup and information campaign to promote public involvement in various environmental activities nationwide.

The President has issued Executive Order (EO) 774 last December calling for the drastic reduction of the country's greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 50 percent within the next two years through massive tree-planting, coastal cleanup and marine protection, garbage segregation, composting and the establishment of sufficient materials recovery facilities (MRF) across the country.

In launching the Green Philippines project at the La Mesa Dam in July 2007, the President encouraged the public, schools and organizations to carry out tree-planting and other environmental activities in critical watersheds, mangrove and coastal areas, parks, highways and campuses including housing subdivisions nationwide.

During the SK national convention in Cebu in October last year, the President urged the youth to involve themselves in worthwhile activities such as environmental protection projects. She also turned over a P10-million check as the government's equity in the projects of the youth organization.

In signing EO 774, the President pointed out that climate change is already impacting adversely on the world and will have catastrophic effects if no immediate action is taken to curb industrial emissions and forest loss. ■

# 2 'Lacson men' seen in US—Gonzalez

by TETCH TORRES  
Inquirer.net

TWO media personalities identified with Senator Panfilo Lacson are in the United States "maybe doing errands" for former police officers linked to the deaths of a publicist and his driver, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Tuesday, March 31.

Quoting Bureau of Corrections Director Oscar Calderon who arrived from the US, Gonzalez said a certain "De Belen" and "Burgos" were also there.

But Gonzalez did not confirm if he was referring to Gerry De Belen, a former newspaper reporter who is now staff of Senator Panfilo Lacson, and Raymond Burgos, a columnist of Abante who is also known to be close to the senator.

Reports said that some media personalities were in the US to deliver money to former police officers Glenn Dumlao and Cezar Mancao to fight the extradition case against them.

The two, who have been implicated in the murders of Salvador

"Bubby" Dacer and Emmanuel Corbito in 2000, are scheduled to return to the Philippines.

Both were under Lacson, then chief of the Philippine National Police and who has also been linked to the killings.

But Gonzalez said Calderon failed to confirm if the reports were true.

Gonzalez believed that there were "unseen hands" trying to prevent Mancao and Dumlao from returning to the country.

He said regardless of the manipulations, it was certain that the extradition would push through because the US courts have granted the Philippines' request. ■



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