

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# RP out of 3rd world status by 2024

PAGE A2 ◀

gathered partners from all over the world, including Singapore, Brazil, Colombia, Philippines and Canada. Each one, through a piece of paper, proclaimed their resolve to end poverty of the five million poorest families in the country by 2024 and gave their pledges.

Among those who gave their pledge was Su-Chzeng Ong, a resident of Singapore and the director of GK Hope Institute, who is a strong believer in the project.

"There may not be poverty in Singapore, but we want to bring GK and make it relevant there. What we have there I think is emotional poverty, and through giving to GK, we can address that," she said.

As the organization grows exponentially, so does its network of partners. This is one of the reasons why the organizers thought of bringing the first global summit to Boston.

"Boston is the most prestigious city as far as education is concerned, it is home to Harvard and MIT, and we would like all these great minds here to study what we have here in the academic setting so that we can grow properly," Meloto said.

Since its launching as a patriotic movement for nation-building in 2003, GK has evolved into an international organization where competing brands and corporations have collaborated to work on a singular goal. McDonald's and Jollibee, ABS-CBN and GMA, Ateneo and La Salle, Smart and Globe, among other rival corporations have banded to support the cause.

"People need to be inspired to rise above partisanship and parochial interests and whatever rivalries we have because as Filipinos, we keep on dividing, whether it is politics or religion," Meloto added.

UP and Ateneo are also working together with GK on research ventures to bring the science into the spirit of community development. The partnership aims to form an academic curriculum to bring organizational and technical expertise to the GK villages.

GK has become a transcendent cause, and

through the numerous villages and homes that have been built around the country, it has also successfully bridged the Muslim and Christian communities and fostered a closer relationship among the partner organizations.

Various Filipino-American organizations have also come together to sponsor villages in the Philippines and have been doing so immediately after GK was launched in the Philippines.

"We are also here in the summit to honor the outstanding GK partners starting with the GK village builders of North America, who have made heroic sacrifices to grow the GK movement and to attract more patriots and partners to our cause of nation building," Meloto said. "You were among the first communities who responded to our call and we would like to thank all of you," he added.

### Changing lives

"The past seven months have been the most fulfilling I have ever experienced," said Jonah de Lumen, who left a lucrative job as a global brand manager at Unilever in New York to pursue a full-time GK work. "I did global work with Unilever and I thought that was big but doing small things that make big impact on people's lives is really amazing," she added.

For now, De Lumen has to contend with what she considers as her primary challenge: dealing with the bureaucracy in the government.

"I am still getting used to it," she said. "There are gems in the rubbles and there are people who are really out there to help."

"The calling became very strong probably a year ago through a conversation. I really felt very blessed that I wanted to give back to the country especially when I know that there's a lot of people who do not have enough," De Lumen added.

Earlier this year, GK and the Department of Agriculture launched Bayan Anihan, which is GK's food sufficiency program. De Lumen is helping in this project, through its food suf-

iciency program.

"The whole idea is to empower communities by teaching the families to farm. We give them the seeds and we teach them how to farm and they reap what they sow. The primary purpose is food on the table. Whatever surplus, they can sell," she explained.

GK is on the process of perfecting the model, which they intend to replicate on a nationwide scale. They have launched 115 farms in the past three months, with 25 metric tons of vegetables harvested and over 17,000 individuals fed.

Like the other GK projects, Bayan Anihan is also a multi-sectoral endeavor involving the government, local government units, youth, non-government organizations and the academe.

A lot of things have been achieved since GK's official founding in 2003. Over 900 communities all over the Philippines and in other developing countries, such as Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and East Timor have welcomed Gawad Kalinga with open arms.

GK groups based outside of the Philippines were also established in recent years. GK Hope Initiative Limited (GK HI) was incorporated in February 2009 and registered as an International Charity Organization in the Singapore Economic Development Board to give Gawad Kalinga an official presence in Singapore.

GK HI is composed of volunteers who work to promote GK and its vision in the Lion City. Singapore volunteers have participated in a number of builds and immersions in the Philippines. They have also been involved in charity work for orphans in East Timor and for the elderly and handicapped in Singapore.

Delegates from Singapore led by GK HI director Su-Chzeng Ong and active supporter Antonio del Rosario, president of Coca Cola Singapore and Malaysia officially announced that the country will be hosting the 2010 GK Global Summit next June. ■

## US envoy confident 2010 polls will happen

PAGE A1 ◀

at her residence in Forbes Park, Makati City.

"You know, all of those are really concerns for Filipinos to decide. Whether you reform your country, it's a Philippine decision. It's not for me I think to decide with you. We hope that whatever you do, it will make sure democracy is stronger," Kenney said.

But the ambassador refused to speculate on whether elections might not be held at all because of moves by the House of Representatives to convert itself into a constituent assembly in order to extend their terms in office.

"I don't think I will speculate on that. But I think we have every confidence that you will have elections," she said.

Kenney stressed that most people here were aware of the term limits of public officials, as well as the rules and laws governing the exercise of their democratic rights.

Asked if President Macapagal-Arroyo might not step down at the end of her term, Kenney replied: "I'm not gonna comment on what someone else might or might be. I have a lot of confidence in the Filipinos to strengthen their democracy and elect their leaders."

Kenney likewise said the numerous presidential contenders towards the 2010 might be a good thing for Filipinos.

"You know, I don't mind that at all. Having a lot of people to choose from a lot of candidates is a great thing. Better have a lot of choices so you can really think about what you want," she added. ■

## Filing and processing of Filvets claims remain on track—Gaa

PAGE A1 ◀

Day this month, we must always remember the courage and sacrifice of our Filipino World War II veterans and rededicate ourselves to the ideals and values they fought for and to ensure that they continue to receive the recognition and benefits that they so justly deserve," Ambassador Gaa said.

"We must also take this opportunity to thank our many friends in the US Congress and in Filipino-American communities across the United States for all their efforts on behalf of our veterans," the Ambassador emphasized. ■

## Foreclosure Moratorium takes effect

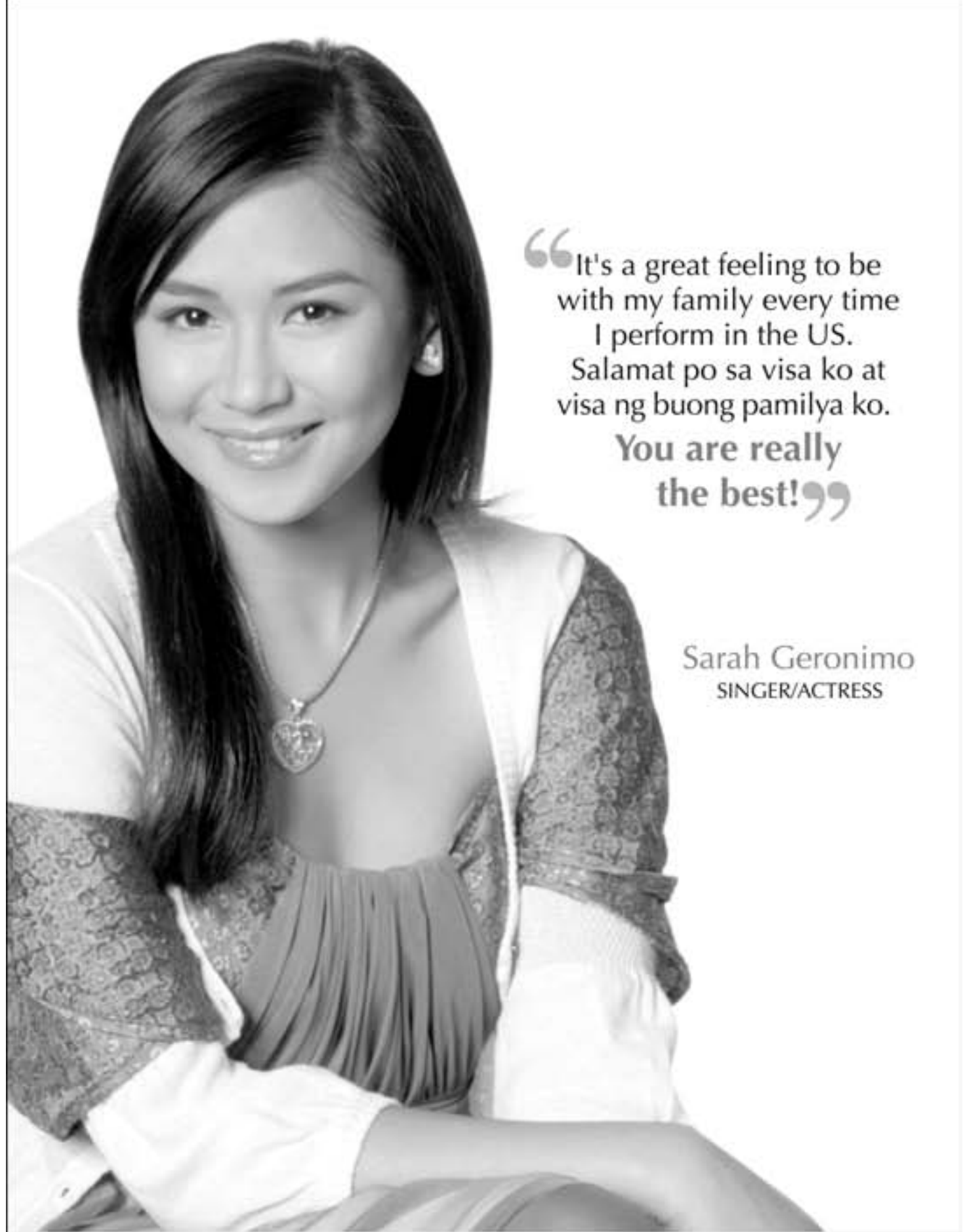
PAGE A1 ◀

Wall Street to help the citizens of "Main Street." The Act gives lenders a choice—either enact a systematic and comprehensive loan modification program or face an additional 90 day foreclosure delay on all of your loans.

In order to avoid the foreclosure moratorium, a lender's comprehensive loan modification program would have to be based, in part, on criteria set forth by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Additionally, loans could only be modified in a couple ways, including interest rate reductions, extension of the loan term, or principal reduction.

Homeowners in California continue to experience record foreclosures, a direct result of irresponsible lending. According to RealtyTrac, in April 2009, California posted the highest foreclosure rate in the nation, with one in every 138 housing units receiving a foreclosure filing during the month. Total foreclosure activity was up 42 percent from April of last year.

The California Foreclosure Prevention Act is the first law in the nation to impose a foreclosure moratorium and encourage quality loan modifications. ■



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