

Seven new envoys present credentials to PGMA in Malacañang

Seven new ambassadors representing the Republics of Chile, Gabon, Uganda, Lithuania, Uzbekistan, Cyprus and Seychelles presented their letters of credence to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang on June 11, 2008.

First to arrive at 11:30 a.m. was Ovid Harasich, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile.

He was accompanied by his wife Gardenia, son Alejandro and Consul and 3rd Secretary Luis Alberto Palma.

He was followed by Jean Pierre Sole Emame, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Gabon, a country in west central Africa sharing borders with Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo and the Gulf of Guinea.

Emame, who arrived at around 11:50 a.m., was accompanied by his 1st Counsellor Francis Hynganga and Consul Eduardo de Guzman.

Last for the morning events at a little past 12 noon was the arrival of Wasswa Rocky Biriggwa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda.

He was accompanied by his 1st Secretary Victor Acellan.

The afternoon events which started at 1:30 p.m. featured the arrival of Dainius Petras Kamaitis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania.

He was accompanied by 3rd Secretary Kristina Salte, Consul Romualdas Vildzius and Consul staff members Andrius Markevicius and Onute Bartkeviciute.

Twenty minutes later at 1:50 p.m., Alisher Salakhitdinov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan arrived.

He was accompanied by a lone embassy official in the person of Batir Tursunov.

At around 2:10 p.m., the representative of the Republic of Cyprus, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Marios Leronymides arrived with Cyprus Consul General Kristen Brindisi.

Last to arrive at 2:30 p.m. was Philippe Le Gall, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Seychelles, an archipelagic nation of 155 islands in the Indian Ocean, some 1,500 kilometers (930 mi) east of mainland Africa, northeast of the island of Madagascar.

Le Gall was accompanied by Consul Joselito Campos.

All seven envoys expressed their gratitude for being received by the President and pledged to work for the continued strengthening of bilateral relations between their respective countries and the Philippines.

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The President, for her part, expressed the same sentiment and wished the envoys luck during their “tour of duty.”

Assisting the President during the presentations of credentials was Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Enrique Manalo.

DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo was unable to join in the event as he, according to the President, was out of the country.

Three of four Philippine wonders now in Top Five in worldwide search for ‘Seven Wonders of Nature’

Not only in the Top Ten but in the Top Five – what with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself leading the charge to have the country’s natural wonders get into the world’s list of

modern-day Wonders of Nature.

Yes – not one, not two, but three of the four Philippine entries are now in the Top Five in the world-wide search for the modern-day Seven Wonders of Nature.

As of today (June 11, Wednesday) Tubbataha Reef east of Palawan is now Number 2 in the list, followed by the Chocolate Hills at Number 3; while the Underground River in Palawan is at Number 5.

Tubbataha Reef, an atoll coral reef in the Sulu Sea east of Palawan, is a marine sanctuary protected by the Philippine government as the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park.

The reef is composed of two atolls – the North and South Reefs which each have a single small islet that protrudes from the water.

The atolls are separated by a deep channel eight kilometers wide.

Over 1,000 species, including many that are endangered, can be found at the reef, including manta rays, lionfish, tortoises, clownfish and sharks, according to the website literate on the well-known scuba-diving site.

The Chocolate Hills in the Visayan island of Bohol, on the other hand, is an “unusual geological formation... composed of around 1,268 perfectly cone-shaped hills of about the same size.”

“Spread over an area of more than 50 square kilometers, the hills are covered in green grass that turns brown during the dry season, giving them the name ‘Chocolate Hills,’” proclaims the New7Wonders site.

Meanwhile, Palawan’s Underground River – also dubbed the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park -- features a limestone karst mountain landscape with an 8.2 kilometer-long navigable underground river.

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Located about 50 kilometers north of the city of Puerto Princesa in Palawan, the river winds through a cave before flowing directly into the South China Sea.

The underground river features amazing formations of stalactites and stalagmites, and several large chambers, with the lower portion of the river subject to tidal influences.

The website enthuses that “the underground river is reputed to be the world's longest. At the mouth of the cave, a clear lagoon is framed by ancient trees growing right to the water's edge. Monkeys, large monitor lizards, and squirrels find their niche on the beach near the cave.”

In Number 9, or just two places short landing in the Magic 7 is another Philippine wonder – the perfectly-shaped Mayon Volcano.

“Mayon Volcano is an active volcano on the Filipino island of Luzon, 15 kilometers northwest of Legazpi City. It is classified by volcanologists as a stratovolcano (composite volcano). Its symmetric cone was formed through alternate pyroclastic and lava flows.

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"Mayon is the most active volcano in the country, having erupted over 47 times in the past 400 years, and is part of what is called the Pacific Ring of Fire."

PGMA to Filipinos on RP's 110th Independence Day: Embrace unity of purpose that won for us freedom 110 yrs ago

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is calling on the nation to embrace the same unity of purpose that won for us independence 110 years ago.

In her video clip that she recorded June 9 (Monday) from the grand hall of the Malacanan Palace Museum, the President said:

"With solidarity, sacrifice and singular purpose, our heroes brought forth a new nation. With the same love of country binding all Filipinos, we too shall achieve for the Philippines and all its peoples the blessings of freedom, justice and progress, and our esteemed place among the great nations of the world."



"In this march to our collective tomorrow, I ask all of you to join as one -- for our motherland, for our families, and for the generations to come," the President called, assuring her countrymen that she remains "bullish on our country, optimistic about our future and deeply committed to being a force for good."

Stressing that she looks "forward with hope to what we shall claim for our national future," President Arroyo reminisced, thus:

"A century and a decade ago today, our revolutionary forefathers braved superior arms and the privations of war to break the chains of colonialism and stand proud among the free nations of the world, Asia's first republic.

"Today, as we celebrate with pride that historic moment, we take stock of what we as a nation have achieved with unity, audacity, sacrifice and patriotism -- and we look forward with hope, to what we shall claim for our national future."

The President assured further: "True to our heritage of freedom, we staunchly protect and strengthen the vibrant democracy that we have restored 22 years ago (in 1986).

"Our political discourse is vibrant, our press is free, our Constitution shelters all who seek its protection and embrace the rule of law. We have tackled our unfortunate legacy of political violence whether it is in the Philippines or abroad with foreign leaders and human rights organizations."

The President then paid tribute to the Filipino people and to the homeland: "Our people are enterprising and welcomed everywhere, as quick learners and hardworkers who are also generous of spirit to strangers and friends alike.

"As our countrymen and women build successful careers and prosperous lives all over the world, foreign investors and travellers flock to our islands eager to harness Filipino talent, enjoy Filipino hospitality, and marvel at the beauty and grandeur of 7,108 magnificent Philippine islands.

"Our archipelago shelters us all -- Filipinos, foreigners, and compatriots across the world warmed by memories of your homeland."

RP to start producing 10% of its oil need

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes announced today that the development of the Galoc oil field in northern Palawan has been completed and that this additional output would raise local oil production to more than 30,000 barrels per day which is equivalent to some 10 percent of local demand.

Reyes said the Philippines would earn some US\$1.4 billion in two years with the additional production of 20,000 barrels of oil per day.

“We anticipate production rate of 17,000 to 20,000 barrels of oil per day. Galoc, together with the current oil production, will be over 30,000 barrels per day. And this will account for almost 10 percent of local demand,” he said.

Reyes said the Galoc Oil field development is a \$120-million investment in the energy infrastructure of the Philippines.

Reyes said the high quality oil found in the Galoc field is light, non-waxy and has medium sulphur content.

“So, it is premium oil and could be refined in local refineries here,” he said.

With domestic refineries given priority, Reyes said the Philippines would also earn from the sale of crude oil which will be benchmarked at international prices.

Reyes said the Philippines could have a foreign exchange savings of some \$1.4 billion if Galoc oil field’s estimated 20-million barrel fuel reserve is extracted in two years, based on the current price of \$135 per barrel.

“You are looking at US\$1.4 billion, if you are able to extract the entire 20 million barrels over the expected span of two years at the current rate of US\$35 per barrel. So, that is the foreign

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exchange savings.``

Increasing the country`s oil and gas reserve and finding other renewable sources of energy are part of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo`s energy independence reform agenda.

Reyes said further exploration works are still being done to find additional reserves in the Galoc oil field area.

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