



# the Migrant Watch

quarterly newsletter of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch

Vol.8 No.4 • December 2009

www.pmrw.org

Manila, Philippines

## Honoring Outstanding Migrants and Advocates

**T**he awarding of the First 18 December Awards has fired up this year's celebrations of the International Migrants Day and the month of overseas Filipinos. This Award was launched in December 2008 by the Inter-agency committee for the celebration of International Migrants Day and the month of overseas Filipinos (IAC), chaired and co-chaired by the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW) and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), respectively. Fr. Fabio Baggio of the Scalabrini Migration Center describes this award as unique because it is the only one that gives recognition to individuals and organizations that are based locally and abroad who exemplify the promotion and protection of the rights of Filipinos overseas. The IAC received eighteen nominations for the award and has chosen five recipients, namely: Ms. Benedicta Gomez-Offen who works in England; Fr. Agustin Advincula who serves in Lebanon; Mr. Romeo Cachola who is based in Hawaii; the Apostleship of the Sea in the United Kingdom; and, the Afro-Asian Migrant Center in Lebanon.

Ms. Benedicta Gomez-Offen is based in England. Having experienced the difficulty of being a migrant worker herself, she has dedicated her services to assist women migrants by referring their cases to appropriate agencies, and providing skills training to those in need. She unrelentingly fought and effectively lobbied for the recognition of the rights of undocumented workers in England in late 1990's, and as such has helped uplift the quality of life of many Filipino workers there.

Fr. Agustin Advincula, a Vincentian Missionary, has demonstrated his dedication and service to the people during the trying times in Lebanon. He manifested the Christian spirit of ser-

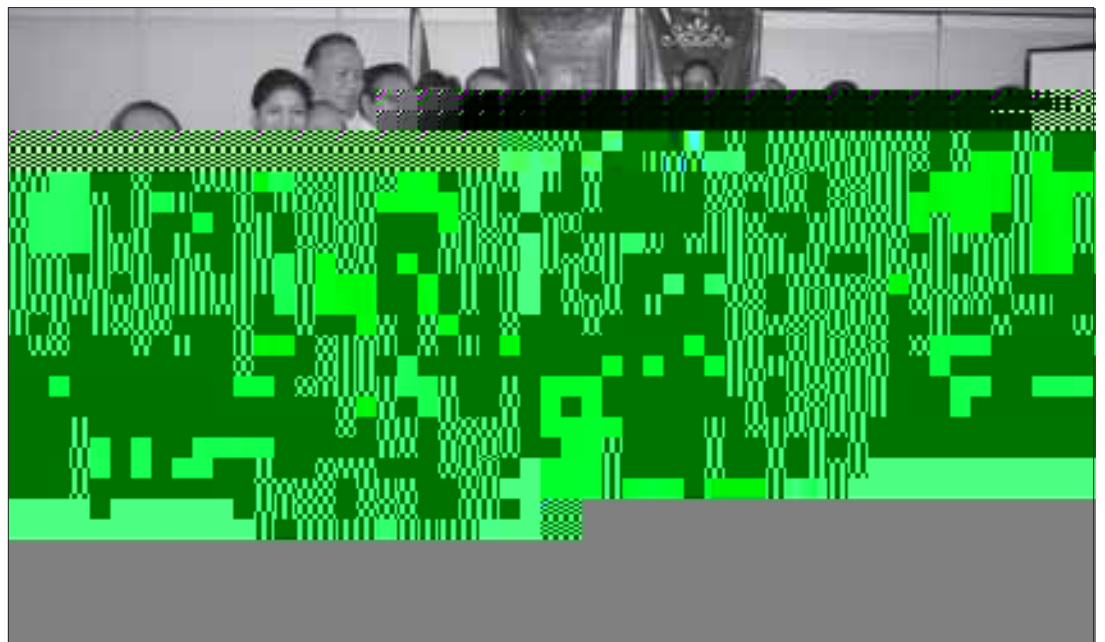
**Dyz A. Pumarada**

*Scalabrini Lay Association*

vice not only through spiritual and moral support, but by responding to migrants' other needs including financial and medical. He also provided refuge to thousands of overseas Filipino workers who were trapped during the 2006 Lebanon War.

Mr. Romeo Cachola, who served his full terms at the Hawaii State House of Representatives some couple of years ago and was elected to the Honolulu City Council, has gained the respect of many Filipinos for his consistent efforts to advocate and promote legislation that caters to the rights and privileges of migrants especially that of the Filipino WWII Veterans. Together with his family, Mr. Cachola rendered other

pag. 2



## Honoring ...

services and joined medical missions, and granted scholarships to deserving students in the Philippines. The Afro-Asian Migrant Center (AAMC) is an organization that caters to the needs of migrants of different races including Filipinos in Lebanon. The commitment to service of the organization is undeniably worth the Award. It provides programs for health education and language lessons for the migrants particularly French and Arabic. In its effort to guide the migrants spiritually, it has reached far flung areas to bring the Eucharist to them. It also does many charity works with the poor children in Lebanon. AAMC is also one among those that extended help and assistance, together with Fr. Advincula, to the migrants during the 2006 Lebanon War.

The Apostleship of the Sea in the United Kingdom has also provided unlimited services and other pastoral assistance while on shore to the many seafarers including Filipinos. It consistently serves as the voice of those who are deprived of their rights; and the companion of those who are lonely and isolated through their various activities that include counseling.

The First 18 December Awards were personally received by Ms. Offen, Mr. Cachola, and Fr. Theo Vlugt who represented the Afro-Asian Center. Awards presenters

were Ms. Camilla Hagstrom from the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines; Mr. Mike Bolos, a former migrant worker and migrants' rights advocate; Mr. Jose Maria Palabrica, the Executive Director of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), and Ms. Carmelita Nuqui, PMRW President. The awarding ceremony was held at the Imperial Palace Suites Hotel in Quezon City and was hosted by Fr. Edwin Corros of the Migrants Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

Following the awarding ceremony was a whole afternoon forum dubbed as "Overseas Filipinos beyond Remittances." The forum elaborated and highlighted the contributions of overseas Filipinos beyond monetary aspects of migration. It was held at the Occupational Safety and Health Center in Quezon City. Ms. Carmelita Nuqui of the PMRW opened the event by welcoming the participants from the government agencies, civil societies, church/religious organizations, and the expert discussants who elaborated on the important topic during their respective presentations.

Dr. Jorge Tigno, Professor of Political Science in UP Diliman presented the potentials and opportunities of overseas Filipinos (OFs) in improving Philippine governance and leadership. Being considered as transmigrants, according to his



presentation, OFs can be agents for change in the political socialization and the development of an alternative political culture.

Dr. Federico Macaranas, Professor of the Asian Institute of Management, highlighted some of the Filipinos overseas who outstandingly contribute to the development of science, engineering and technology, and other related fields by describing their important achievements in their particular fields of expertise. He also offered some valuable insights on how these OF scientists and experts can be tapped as effective partners in improving science and technology in the field of education and practice in the Philippines and how a program can be developed to serve as an effective tool in dealing with the brain drain issue as a result of the massive exodus of professionals for overseas employment.

Other than technical expertise of OFs, Dr. Filomeno Aguilar, Jr., a Professor at the Ateneo de Manila University accentuated in his presentation how Filipinos can likewise be regarded as Cultural Diplomats. He cited some worthy examples of Filipino Cultural Diplomacy as exemplified by our ordinary migrant workers/OFWs, knowledge workers/professors, communications specialists, restaurateurs, artists and performers, and athletes who are very much competent in effectively promoting Filipino culture and heritage.

Moreover, overseas Filipinos are also seen as effective Lay Missionaries. This thesis was expounded by Most Rev. Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, the Chairman of the Epis-

copal Commission of the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. Overseas Filipinos being in constant relationship to people of different races, varied social or economic statuses, and faith backgrounds are considered by the Church as valuable protagonists of the Christian faith when they move to other countries. Their simple actions toward others, including the sincere service and tender love and care to other people, convey a lot of values that are influenced by their Christian faith which in turn reciprocate to them favorably.

Towards the end of the forum, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA) successfully launched their website and posters, respectively. In particular, the CMA for its part launched its campaign poster depicting the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers Convention on the level of Philippine implementation which was reviewed during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Sessions held in November 2008 and April 2009 in Geneva.

Ms. Stella Go of the Philippine Migration Research Network accurately presented the synthesis of the whole afternoon's conference, while Ms. Minda Valencia of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas closed the event. Indeed, there are much more valuable contributions and benefits provided by our Filipino *Kababayans* that are worthy of being given importance and honors, more than their remittances.

## the Migrant Watch

PMRW Secretariat: *Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC)*  
4, 13th St., New Manila, Quezon City, Philippines  
63-02-7243512 • 7214296 (fax) • [migrantswatch@pmrw.org](mailto:migrantswatch@pmrw.org)

### Editor

*Lisa Garcia (DAWN)*

### Editorial Board

*Carmelita G. Nuqui (DAWN), Fabio Baggio (SMC),*

### Writers

*Dyz A. Pumarada (SLA), Edwin Corros (CBCP-ECMI),  
Ellene Sana (CMA), Michelle Ann Samonte (PMRW Secretariat),  
Jet Fajardo (MOYSE)*

## Exodus Formation Seminar in Malaysia

Edwin D. Corros – ECMI-CBCP

The Exodus Formation Seminar, which was initiated by the Scalabrini Migration Center in 2001 and is now under the direction of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI) of the CBCP, had just been exported to Malaysia recently through the invitation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore. Over sixty pastoral workers from various parishes of the three countries gathered in MAJODI Pastoral Center in Johor, Malaysia from December 3 to 6, 2009 to participate and listen to the presentations of speakers from the Philippines in the persons of Dr. Marla Asis, Dr. Fabio Baggio of the Scalabrini Migration Center and Fr. Edwin Corros of ECMI.

The seminar began with the celebration of the Eucharist presided by His Excellency, Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing, the current president of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People of the Bishops Conference of Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore. The Bishop warmly welcomed the participants at the chapel of the vast pastoral center where he likewise resides.

Malaysia is the third country that has requested for the holding of the Exodus seminar outside the Philippines. Japan and Korea had invited the course twice in the past and the seminar was delivered in English with simultaneous Korean and Japanese translations. Both countries have now a very active migrants' commission for their respective bishops' conference following the holding of the Exodus seminar. As a result, CBCP-ECMI now enjoys a better collaborative cooperation with the Churches of Japan and Korea.

The formation seminar designed for the pastoral workers with migrants normally held for one week has been reformatted to three days not only to address the needs of the realities of the three countries involved, specifically Malaysia which had actually led the organizing of this formation seminar, but to establish networking among participants. Hailed as "A dream come true," by Cheryl Lee, a member of the organizing committee, the Exodus in Malaysia was what most of them had been wishing for many years ago. Most of them had been longing for a formation specifically meant for the pastoral workers for migrants. Mostly attended by lay people, the seminar was staged as an attempt to train more pastoral workers with migrants and refugees. Several of the participants are already actively involved in the ministry and a few others are engaged in the pastoral care of the refugees. In a rare occasion to undergo formation, priests and religious took a break from their parish commitment and flew to the Malaysian peninsula in order to be present.

Malaysia is hosting over three million migrants from within Asia and even from far away Africa. The country is facing a strong challenge of accompanying the foreigners in their midst, especially the refugees. With a stable rising of GNP annually, the country is getting more attractive to the foreigners. Working conditions however are not improving and migrants' rights are always violated. Workers from India and Nepal are mostly favored by the government to work legally in jobs abhorred by the locals. The country has also been an attractive destination of trafficked persons. Recently, the country was classified under a tier three level by the



United States for having failed to curb the many number of reported cases of victims of human trafficking.

The Exodus formation seminar has allowed participants to learn more about migration realities and let them appreciate the work that they had been doing. Fr. Fabio Baggio, the director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), a leading research and study institution specializing on human mobility based in Asia, has provided the participants an appreciation of the theological readings of migration. He had also discussed the magisterial position on migration. Dr. Marla Asis, who works as editor of the Asian and Pacific Migration Journal of the SMC has presented the trends, flows and gender dimension of migration from the global to Asian perspective. Fr. Edwin Corros tackled the topic on building awareness, pastoral care and advocacy for migrants and refugees. Moreover, he also discussed the pastoral planning for the ministry of migrants and refugees based on the very experience he has working with the CBCP's Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Itinerant People where he is the executive secretary. A select group of resource speakers from three countries of the bishops' conference had likewise shared an overview of the migrants and refugees' situation in their respective countries.

Excited and full of inspiration to work harder in their respective countries, participants had given the speakers high grades in their individual evaluation form. The participants went back to their respective dioceses with renewed commitment and full of enthusiasm in their work among the migrants and refugees. Some participants even expressed intention to invite the three speakers from Manila to bring the Exodus program to Singapore and Sabah in the second half of 2010. The Exodus program in Malaysia was a concrete result of the meetings among Asian bishops held in Manila and Thailand last year. It was on those occasions when the bishops were informed about the on-going formation for the ministers working among the people on the move which is being administered by the Scalabrinians in partnership with the CBCP-ECMI. The Exodus seminar in Malaysia was made possible through the support of Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing. The annual seminar directed by ECMI in the Philippines is normally funded by Missio-Munchen in Germany.

# GFMD 3 in Athens: too much, too little

by Ellene Sana, CMA

From November 2-5, 2009, the third Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) took place in Athens, Greece. It was hosted by the Greek government. Just like in the first two GFMDs, the first part of the forum was the Civil Society Days (CSD) held on November 2-3. The Greek government tapped the Onassis Foundation to make the preparations for the CSD.

Similarly, the number of civil society participants selected from across the globe was limited to 200, with an additional 30 slots for representatives of Greek CS. There were six of us representing Philippine-based groups; I represented the Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA).

The theme for the 3<sup>rd</sup> GFMD CSD was "Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All". The forum took place amidst a global financial crisis that started at the heels of the 2<sup>nd</sup> GFMD in Manila in 2008. The venue, as well as accommodation for the participants, was the luxurious Astir Palace located at Vouliagmeni, off the city center of Athens.

The two days were organized into nine (9) one and a half hour simultaneous workshops including two "new topics": Future of the Forum and Building Alliances between Business and Civil Society. There was also interface between CS and government representatives which was more organized and focused than the first one held in Manila last year.

The two days went by swiftly. It was almost time to leave Greece too as my visa was good for only 5 days – day 1 for arrival; day 2-3 for the CSD sessions, day 4 – to check out; day 5 after lunch was

departure from Greece. There was not even much time to enjoy the huge grand rooms the participants were billeted in. Neither was there time to appreciate the wondrous panoramic surroundings of the Astir Palace resort.

What did we accomplish in the two days? Were we able to arrive at some unities in the one and half hour workshop sessions? Did the CS representatives who met up with government representatives during the interface deliver concrete and clear rights-based messages to governments? How did the government representatives take these all in?

I was not sure of the answers to any of these questions. In fact, I did not have the answers to these questions. They were the same questions I asked myself, and which we asked among kindred spirits, in the two previous GFMDs. I knew that there were questions on the accuracy of the reports from the workshops as reported in the plenary session. I knew that the participants were a broad mix of like-minded groups as well as not-so-like-minded groups hence the difficulty in forging unities and common grounds. I was aware that transparency and consultation vis a vis processes were not observed religiously. I also knew too well, because we were constantly reminded of it, that when we make recommendations, we have to be mindful that we are making the recommendations to governments hence we should ensure that the recommendations were "realistic, concrete and doable" for governments.

But the two days plus were also good full days to share and exchange information with other participants from across the globe. It was enriching to hear migrant sto-



ries from outside Asia and the Philippines. It broadens one's horizon and perspective. It was a good occasion to collect migration materials and publications. It was a golden opportunity to exchange contact numbers and do networking. It was a pleasure to meet again old friends and colleagues in advocacy as well as explore new friendships and partnerships.

Moreover, the trip to Greece provided an opportunity to participate once again in the parallel forum dubbed as the Peoples' Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights or PGA which was started in Manila last year and spearheaded by Migrants Rights International. The PGA brought together migrants rights groups and trade unions to discuss the multifaceted issues of the global economic crisis and its impact on migrants. It was a worthwhile and exhilarating experience to shuttle between the Astir Palace and the Technopolis venue of the PGA which was at the city center of Athens. It was also a time for CMA to be proud of its partner group in Greece, the Kasapi Hellas, which rose to the occasion as the main local organizing partner of MRI in the PGA.

And yes, it was also a good occasion to reflect on the three yearly GFMDs in terms of creating a better environment for the migrants and those who chose to stay put as non-migrants.

Considering the nature and design of the GFMD, it serves, at most, as a multilateral platform for discussions on issues where migration and development intersect. Participating States are not in any way pressured to make concrete hard decisions right there and then because the GFMD is voluntary, informal and non-binding. For the last three years this has been the GFMD. As we move on to GFMD 2010 in Mexico, I believe it is imperative that there should be serious rethinking of the GFMD in terms of its processes, programs, goals and objectives and stakeholders. This applies not only to government stakeholders but to migrants' rights and trade union groups as well.

Perhaps an annual GFMD may be too short a time interval to expect notable changes in the migration-development landscape with the human rights of migrants at the center of it. Or a costly exercise if only for a small gain?

# Catholic Church to celebrate Migrants' Sunday

by Edwin Corros, CBCP-ECMI

The Catholic Church in the Philippines will celebrate the 24<sup>th</sup> National Migrants Sunday (NMS) on February 21, 2010. Held annually to pay tribute to the millions of Filipinos working and residing overseas and to their families left behind, the event carries the theme: "*Sustainable Economic Development: Key to an effective migrant family reunification.*" As various dioceses in the country are organizing different activities to celebrate the annual event, the main celebration will take place in the Dioceses of Bayombong in Nueva Viscaya and Tagbilaran in Bohol where positive practices in the ministry for migrants are taking place. The Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) invites everyone to reflect on its theme to which the next political leaders are being challenged to offer tangible solutions to the country as a radical response to the main reason why Filipinos have to go abroad. Following is the reflection prepared by ECMI as the Church celebrates NMS 2010.

In the recent years international migration phenomenon in the Philippines has become too complex an issue that one can no longer ignore as time goes by. For many Filipinos employment overseas is the only way out from unemployment and socio-economic and political poverty which is prevailing in the country. And who will not choose migration, when all the promises of betterment and uplifting of one's quality and standard of living are offered? However, after many years of working overseas consequent to the several changes and promises of political leadership, most ordinary people did not experience real improvement in life. It is unfortunate that migration is not that all bed of roses. Its promise of economic fulfillment is not exactly what is happening to most OFWs, otherwise, majority of those more than eight million Filipinos overseas should have already been returning home to enjoy the fruits of their stints overseas. They should by this time, have already stabilized their own socio-economic lives and had become active partners of the country's development. If one will scrutinize the labor migration closely its many negative consequences would cause more people to be depressed.

Tales of illegal recruitment, contract substitution, trafficking in persons, non-payment of salaries, and all forms of physical, psychological and human rights' violations are just some of the migration experiences of many Filipinos. At times, without any other recourse due to unprepared return, migrant workers and their respective families would find themselves at a total loss. Government could not provide real long term solutions as well. Hence the supposed "temporary" employment has become a vicious cycle of migration. It promotes prolonged separation of family members, creating disorders in ordinary family life relations. It leaves them ill-equipped to the challenges of changing roles of fathers, mothers, and children.

With all these negative impacts of migration to family and society, the Church continuously conveys its concern. How the social costs of migration had been shaping the family's structure and values is her foremost concern. The unity and values of family are weakened due to extended separation. Material wealth has become the measure of being okay of the family, and giving less attention to the quality of communications and caring between members of migrant families. Both the OFW, and the

family left behind had become more vulnerable to all kinds of temptations that eventually lead them to become dysfunctional. When marital separation has become inevitable this brings more complex adjustments to the children. The work overseas may be good to provide the basic needs of the family, but if such means becomes the cause of family breakdown among migrant families, what then is the significance of this work? Such employment forfeits clearly the reason to sustain family life values. For the family to survive, it is essential that economic development is indeed given a priority at the domestic level.

In this light the key to strengthen the Filipino families which is the very heart of any given society, is to provide options in the local economy and engage the migrant family productively. The call to the Philippine government to create sustainable local industries that will meet the needs of majority of the present labor force has long been outstanding. The Church would like to raise its voice again on behalf of the OFW and their left behind families that political leaders should continue to address and respond to the future generations' needs, to include: the creation of industries that could absorb more local employment that provides security of tenures, and competitive salaries, to a more decent quality of life of majority of Filipinos; initiating friendly economic portfolio that would encourage OFWs and their families to save and invest in business in the Philippines; and, building avenues for enterprise development matching the needs of the community and the skills acquired by the OFWs. With these kinds of economic options in the Philippines, international migration will look unattractive to many Filipinos who are mostly family-oriented, knowing that leaving behind the family due to economic push would be one of the most painful experiences.

ECMI calls for inward-looking sustainable economic development opportunities for migrant families' productive participation to economic development. Thus, international migration should not be anymore the first recourse but should rather be the last choice, freely decided on by anyone. Therefore, the family structure, its basic functionality and unity will no longer be put in vulnerable situations leaving them at the risk of usual breakage. What sort of family this country will produce in the future depends on the kind of policy we have in regulating migration. After four decades, a challenge to the next leader of this country is arriving at a real plan or reintegration for those wanting to reunite with their loved ones. How to produce local jobs that would provide employment yearly to hundreds of thousands college graduates should be the aim of the country's next leadership if it considers family unity a major concern. Sustainable economic development is indeed the key to an effective migrant family reunification.



# MOYSE's gifts to the migrants

Jet Fajardo, MOYSE

October 25, 2009 was a very special day for all the migrants of Cheonan and Daejeon City. It was the first "Migrant's Day" celebration wherein no less than our very own Archbishop Ozvaldo Padilla, Papal Nuncio to South Korea, was our special guest and mass celebrant at Simbudong Catholic Church. The Eucharistic celebration was followed by the presentation of special awards to the Korean and migrant volunteers who have unselfishly shared their corporal works and services to Daejeon and Cheonan MOYSE. A special program filled with entertainment was also held to the delight of all the guests and migrants. Indeed it was a successful event because the venue, as well as the church, was overflowing with parishioners and migrants. There was also a special luncheon feast prepared by all the Korean benefactors, sponsors and volunteers of Cheonan for this special event. All the migrants enjoyed the festivity especially the bountiful amount of food that MOYSE and the Simbudong parishioners prepared for them. The Cheonan MOYSE Media



Daejeon and Cheonan MOYSE Migrants Centers, IMCC (International Migrants Community in Chungchoeng) and the parishioners of Simbudong Parish Join Forces on Migrant's Day

Team whose members are migrants of Cheonan took pictures and covered this event with the support of the NBC, a Korean television station.

A bazaar or the local version of the Philippines' "Ukay-ukay" was also organized by Cheonan MOYSE and the International

Migrants Community in Chungchoeng (IMCC) for the migrants last November 19, 2009 at the Oryongdong Parish multi-purpose hall. A variety of clothes, winter jackets, shirts, jeans, shoes and dresses, appliances like electric toasters and heaters, and slightly used desktop computers were sold at very cheap prices. You can see the big smiles of the migrants because of the enormous baggage they would be able to send back home to their families in time for the Christmas holidays.

Finally, last December 20, 2009, Cheonan MOYSE and the IMCC held a Christmas Party and a raffle draw for the migrants. Various prizes like gift sets, digital camera, motor bike, computers, MP4, comforters/blankets and DVD player were given away during the raffle. The Cheonan Galleria mall, a big and popular mall in Korea, donated 100 boxes of Kimchi and 250 gift sets of grocery items to

the delight of all the migrants. Bishop Yoh HeungShik 'Lazaro,' the Bishop of Daejeon Diocese, was the special guest for this year's Christmas celebration with the migrants. He celebrated mass which was followed by the baptism of the un-baptized children and also the baptism of the new Korean Catholics (Korean nationals and those married to Filipino women). Indeed, 2009 was a blessed year for all the migrants especially in Cheonan City. Let us continue to keep the fire burning for the Daejeon and Cheonan MOYSE!



The distribution of gifts for the multi-cultural children of Cheonan City last December 27, 2009. All gifts were sponsored and prepared by the Catholic International Parish in Seoul.

## MOYSE

74-4 3F, Ojeong-Dong,  
Daeduk-Gu, Daejeon Si  
South Korea 306-817  
82.42.639.2665/6  
82.42.639.2667 (fax)  
tjmoyse@hanmail.net

Despite protests and objections<sup>1</sup> from the OFWs, migrants' rights groups, the government agencies led by DOLE, POEA and OWWA, the Congress Bicameral Conference Committee on November 18, 2009<sup>2</sup> approved the proposal for a compulsory insurance coverage for agency-hired OFWs. The proposal will purportedly benefit some 260,000 OFWs who are de-

# CCOFW last meeting for 2009

The last meeting of the CCOFW for the year 2009 was held at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) last November 11. It was chaired by Mr. Poe Gratela and co-chaired by Director Nimfa de Guzman of the POEA.

The meeting started with the report of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on the Institutionalization of the CCOFW, with Ms. Ellene Sana reporting on the updates of the draft Executive Order (EO). The members present reacted and gave suggestions on further improving the EO. It was agreed that the EO will be circulated again so that everyone can put their suggestions. The TWG will just compile all the suggestions and report again on the EO updates in the next meeting.

The next agenda concerned the preparations for the celebration of the International Migrants' Day and the month of Overseas Filipinos, as well as the holding of the First 18 December Awards. PMRW President Carmelita Nuqui discussed the activities for the whole day event. The morning schedule will be the awarding ceremony and testimonial lunch for the recipients of the First 18 December Awards. She also invited everyone to come and participate in the forum scheduled in the afternoon. Ms. Nuqui and Fr. Fabio

Baggio requested Philhealth to reconsider its decision to support the event.

The National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO) reported on their accomplishments. Fr. Baggio asked the NRCO representative about the center's budget allocation. In the interest of transparency, he asked where the allocated budget of the NRCO went. However the NRCO representatives could not give him a straight answer so Fr. Baggio requested for an external assessment of NRCO. Ms. Nuqui requested the NRCO representative to provide copies of narrative and financial reports to the CCOFW members. Philhealth also presented their programs for the OFWs. Mr. Rey Malonzo, a member of the board of Philhealth, was present. He addressed some of the concerns of the members from the previous meetings. Fr. Baggio commented that whenever he travels in some countries in Europe, the migrants there are not informed on how to claim their rights. Mr. Luther Calderon, the president of KAMPI and who also organizes Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) said that the representatives of



Philhealth are not available during the PDOS. There were other members who likewise raised issues to Philhealth.

The next update was provided by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) regarding the remaining balance from the OWWA Medicare Fund and assessment report for the new HSW Program by POEA. With regards to the situation of distressed OFWs abroad, OWWA reported that it has repatriated 26 drivers from Dubai and another 426 workers from Jeddah.

The next meeting of the CCOFW is scheduled on January 13, 2010 to be hosted by OWWA.

**Richelle Ann Samonte**  
PMRW Secretariat

## the Migrant Watch

PMRW Secretariat: *Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC)*  
No. 4, 13th St., New Manila, Quezon City, Philippines  
Tel. (63-2) 7243512 • Fax (63-2) 7214296  
[www.pmrw.org](http://www.pmrw.org) • [migrantswatch@pmrw.org](mailto:migrantswatch@pmrw.org)

