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100M Filipinos by 2010

A little more than three years from now, the year President Gloria Arroyo finishes her term as President of the Philippines in 2010, the population of the Philippines would have increased to 100 million according to the Medium Series of the 2000 Census-based population projections of the National Statistics Office which collaborated with the Inter-Agency Working Group on population projections.

By then, the Philippines would become the 13th most populous country in the world.

This means that around 30 million Filipinos would be added to the nation's population between 2000 and 2010. Even if the projected growth rate was by 1.95% in the 2005-2010, the 85.3 million Filipinos in 2005 would have jumped to 94.0 million or more in 2010.

This is alarming because the 1.95% population growth rate is still very high, although down from the previous 2.3% population growth. Add to this is the fact that the country has no program to moderate population growth.

According to NSO Administrator Carmelita N. Erica, the statistics which were dated a few months old confirmed that the country's population would continue to grow. People would also become older as it is projected that child-bearing rate by women in the Philippines will continue to decline and the survival rates of all age groups will improve. In 2005, the age group 0-14 accounted for 35.0% of the total population. By 2010, this age group would comprise 33.0% and by 2040, 23.1%. Also, by 2010, 4.3% of Filipinos would be 65 year old or over by 2010.

Among the regions, CALABARZON is projected to have the largest population by 2010 with 11.9 million people compared to 11.6 million of NCR, which was the most populated area in the Philippines during the last census.

A large population would put

a question to the ability of the government to deliver basic essential services to a rapidly multiplying population. There would be demand for more jobs, homes, power, water, cleaner air, food, transportation, health services and living space.

In its editorial on the subject, a leading newspaper in the Philippines, pointed to the church as the one in control of population growth in the Philippines when it said: 'The population has galloped at such a speed because the government has allowed the Catholic church to dictate the national population policy. The Church opposes family planning, referring the natural or 'rhythm' system of contraception to artificial ones.'

Because of a fear of losing the Catholic vote, which according to political analyst do not exist, all presidents of the country from way back to the present, were afraid of antagonizing the church. It was only then President Fidel V. Ramos who dared to promote responsible parenthood through a range of contraceptives during his term.

Given the new figures, there is a growing concern, not only among Filipino expatriates, but the many thoughtful ones in the Philippines who worry how an unchecked expanding population affect the country's natural resources - water, land, and food.

This fear is also based on the increasing unemployment, brownouts, water shortage, the proliferation of slums, growing homelessness, air and water pollution, environmental degradation and the erosion of the natural resources.

Already a telltale sign is being experienced. The Social Weather Station (SWS) latest survey shows that 2.9 million Filipino families went hungry at least once over the past three months. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, Jr. said that this reflects the reality of the Philippine economy.

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Former "Colegialas" Chosen in FAWAA Awards



FAWAA Awardees: L-R - Teacher. Linda Swords, solicitor Imelda Argel, represented in the ceremony by her son Victor Guevara and Atty. Lolita Farmer, OAM. Another awardee not in photo is Dr. Ma. Cynthia Leigh. *Bayanihan News photos*

The bountiful harvest Australia had from the gains of four *colegialas* (university educated ladies) who did not stay put in the Philippines, but instead migrated abroad, was recognised last Saturday 28 October during the Filipino Australian Women's Achievement (FAWAA) awards night.

Four professional Filipino-Australian women received awards in their respective fields, after nearly a lifetime of contribution in New South Wales. They are teacher Mrs. Linda Swords, Life Time Achievement; Dr. Maria Cynthia Leigh, Achievement in the Practice of Profession; solicitor Imelda Argel, Achievement in Corporate Practice or Entrepreneurship; and solicitor

Lolita Farmer, OAM, Achievement in Public, Civic or Community Service.

They stand out from a total of 30 nominations who were presented to the public during a glittering \$120-a-plate dinner ceremony at Sydney's Four Seasons Hotel.

The FAWAA Awards board of judges consisted of His Excellency Philippine Ambassador to Australia Mr. Ernesto de Leon, Philippine Consul General in Sydney Ma. Theresa Lazaro, SBS Chief Newsreader Mary Kostakidis, educator and businesswoman Imelda Roche, and academican Dr. Mina Rocas.

ConGen Lazaro said the awards is "our way of contributing to the ongoing discourse on Australian nation-building."

The next FAWAA Awards will be in five years time.

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly Mr John Aquilina referred to the nominees as those who "have made a mark in rural and regional areas of New South Wales, in the profession and in business life."

Speaker Aquilina extended the recognition by the NSW government of the achievements of the nominees and awardees and congratulated the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney and the Community Relations Commission (CRC) for a Multicultural NSW for partnering in the Awards initiative.

The Chair of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW Mr.

Stapan Kerkyasharian said the CRC is proud to be involved in the inaugural FAWAA Awards.

Life Time Achievement Award recipient Mrs. Linda Swords is a tireless community leader and a retired teacher. She holds a Diploma in English and Master in Education from Sydney University as a Colombo Plan Scholar. Her pioneering spirit includes her involvement in the early Filipino organisations in Sydney including the Philippine Friendship Association, Sandigan, Damayan, University of the Philippines Alumni Association.

For her part, Dr. Maria Cynthia Leigh, recipient of

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