

DFA SECRETARY YASAY MEETS FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN BAHRAIN



H.E. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Perfecto R. Yasay Jr. delivers his Keynote speech to the Filipino community

25 January 2017 – Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary H.E. Perfecto R. Yasay, Jr. embarked on a short visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain and kicked off his trip with a town hall meeting with the Filipino Community organized by the Philippine Embassy in Manama, Bahrain in the evening of 24 January 2017.

Over 200 leaders and members of the Filipino Community in Bahrain gathered to meet Secretary Yasay at the Our Lady of Arabia Auditorium of the Sacred Heart Church in Manama, Bahrain.



H.E. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Perfecto R. Yasay Jr., accompanied by Ambassador Alfonso A. Ver, meets Filcom leaders.

To start the program, students from the Philippine School in Bahrain led the singing of the Philippine and Bahrain national anthems. Philippine Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, H.E., Alfonso A. Ver, welcomed the members of the Filipino Community and introduced the honorable Secretary to the audience.

In his keynote address, Secretary Yasay expressed his profound gratitude to Bahrain's Royal Family led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for their warm welcome during his brief visit,

for the Kingdom's gracious hospitality to the thousands of Filipinos in Bahrain and their recognition of the role of Filipinos in Bahrain's nation-building process.

Secretary Yasay shared that the President recognizes the invaluable contribution of OFWs to the country's economy, and assured the audience that the concerns of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are a priority of the Duterte Administration. He further shared that the President launched in 2016 a "one-stop shop for OFWs" which houses representatives from agencies that offer services that are relevant to OFWs, as well as, the approval of the establishment of a bank primarily dedicated to OFWs.

With respect to consular concerns of OFWs, Secretary Yasay stressed that the DFA is working on the streamlining of procedures and requirements to ease the process of obtaining passports and other travel documents especially for OFWs. He also mentioned that the DFA is committed to improving the online appointment system and in shortening the waiting time for passport release. He further informed the audience that a bill was pending in the Philippine Congress, seeking to lengthen the validity period of Philippine passports from five to ten years.

Secretary Yasay briefed the audience on the Duterte Administration's fight against illegal drugs. He emphasized that the President respects and values Human Rights and condemns Extra-Judicial Killings (EJKs) and assured the audience that there are no state-sponsored EJKs.

He also affirmed the Philippine Government's commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), and in accordance with International Law, including the UNCLOS.

He further revealed that the President plans to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain soon.

Towards the end of the meeting, the officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy in Bahrain and the Filipino community surprised the Secretary with a birthday cake and a birthday song.

The meeting ended with a Photo opportunity with H.E. Perfecto R. Yasay, Jr. END



Secretary Yasay expresses his gratitude for the surprise birthday and song