PHOTO RELEASE

LA PCG Conducts Human Trafficking Forum and Workshop in Los Angeles

Los Angeles, 20 October 2018 – The Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles conducted a day-long forum and workshop on human trafficking on 20 October 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Los Angeles Hotel, as part of commemorative activities for Filipino-American History Month in October.

Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz welcomed the participants to the forum and declared that, “As the web of human trafficking expands, it is inevitable, therefore, that our best response to combat trafficking is to build multiple networks and coalitions among advocates, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, government agencies, businesses, and community members.”

Photo shows from left to right: Vice Consul Dyan Kristine Miranda Pastrana; Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz; Mr. Christopher Lapinig, Resident Attorney of the Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles; Ms. Rohida Khan, Victims Assistance Specialist of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); Mr. Paul Chang, Regional Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the U.S. Department of Labor; Captain Kent Wegener, Head of the Human Trafficking Bureau of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department; Mr. Miguel Sangalang, Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and Ms. Aquilina Soriano, Executive Director of the Pilipino Workers Center.
Deputy Mayor Miguel Sangalang of the City of Los Angeles delivered his brief remarks and underlined the gravity and magnitude of the crime, particularly as it affects the residents of the city.

Vice Consul Dyan Kristine Miranda Pastrana gave a brief overview of the forum and the Assistance to Nationals program of the Philippine Consulate General. In her remarks, Vice Consul Pastrana highlighted the Tier 1 ranking of the Philippines in the Trafficking in Persons Report of the U.S. Department of State since 2016 and described the laws governing trafficking in persons in the Philippines.

The forum had two panel discussions. The morning panel discussed the emerging trends and modalities in human trafficking which was moderated by Ms. Aquilina Versoza, Executive Director of the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC). The panelists for the morning were Captain Kent Wegener, Head of the Human Trafficking Bureau of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Mr. Christopher Lapinig, Resident Attorney of the Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles; Ms. Rohida Khan, Victims Assistance Specialist of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and Mr. Paul Chang, Regional Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the U.S. Department of Labor.
The afternoon panel tackled the gaps and best practices in addressing the problem of human trafficking. The panelist for the afternoon were Ms. Cristal Mills, Victims Specialist of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Ms. Aquilina Versoza of PWC; Ms. Mary David, Communications Director of Journey Out; Ms. Angela Guanzon, Chair of the Survivor Leadership Program of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST); Dr. Susie Baldwin, Medical Director of the Office of Women's Health of the LA County Department of Public Health; and Mr. Brian Tan, Attorney at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. The afternoon panel was moderated by Vice Consul Pastrana.

The forum participants were composed of human trafficking advocates and survivors, community leaders, lawyer groups, students, members of faith-based organizations, law enforcement personnel, and business owners. The forum aims to strengthen the community networks in tackling human trafficking in Southern California. END