



Press Release
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PhilConGen LA Featured in Episode 13 of DFA's OFW TOWN HALL



Above: Screenshot of Episode 13 of OFW TOWN HALL, featuring the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles on 03 September 2020.

09 September 2020, Los Angeles – The Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles is proud to have been featured in Episode 13 of the Department of Foreign Affairs’ (DFA) video conference entitled, *OFW TOWN HALL*, streamed via Facebook Live on Thursday, 03 September 2020 at 8:00 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).

In their opening remarks, co-hosts Undersecretary Sarah Lou Y. Arriola and Undersecretary Ernesto “Ernie” C. Abella updated the gathering about the Philippine government’s assistance to Filipinos affected by the CoViD-19 pandemic and the ongoing repatriation of seafarers and other Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz conveyed his sincere appreciation to Undersecretaries Arriola and Abella for featuring the Consulate General and giving him the opportunity to share the current situation of overseas Filipinos in the southwest United States.

Consul General Cruz also took the opportunity to apprise the public about the Consulate General’s efforts to address the concerns and needs of overseas Filipinos and advised those wishing to avail of consular services to visit the Consulate General’s website to set an appointment and read up on guidelines, which are being implemented in accordance with local restrictions on public gatherings and other health safety orders.

Resource speakers from the Filipino-American community in Southern California, Southern Nevada and Arizona included: 1) Atty. Audie de Castro, PHL Honorary Consul in San Diego, CA; 2) Ms. Aquilina Versoza, Executive Director of Pilipino Workers Center of Southern CA; 3) Atty. Abraham Lim, Commissioner of the City of Montebello, CA; 4) Mr. Leo Aromin, Fil-Am Community Leader in Phoenix, AZ; 5) Mr. Bernie Benito, Ail-Am Community Leader in Las Vegas, NV; and 6) Dr. Antonio Moya, National Clinician Scholar from UCLA.

Honorary Consul De Castro shared the efforts of San Diego County in combatting CoViD-19 and discussed initiatives by the Fil-Am community in assisting our *kababayan* in need. He highlighted Pag-Asa Law Clinic, which he recently helped establish to provide free to low-cost legal services to Filipinos, specifically undocumented immigrants, victims of domestic violence, and tenants in unfair housing situations.

For her part, Ms. Versoza discussed the various programs PWC initiated to provide assistance to Filipinos and Filipino-Americans who need financial assistance, food, and health care, as well as those who have been displaced and need shelter. She discussed how many of PWC's members have been impacted by the pandemic due to their immigration status and the nature of their jobs, most of which are caregiving and domestic work.

Filipino community leaders Mr. Aromin and Mr. Benito gave an update on current CoViD-19 cases involving Filipino nationals in Arizona and Southern Nevada, respectively. They further shared information about community-led projects to extend assistance to *kababayan* adversely affected by the CoViD-19 pandemic, not only in their respective regions, but also back home in the Philippines.

Atty. Lim discussed the increasing number of hate incidents and hate crimes against the Asian-American community during the pandemic, and the programs being initiated by the government and civic organizations to foster increased awareness among community members on this issue.

Dr. Moya, for his part, shared a medical perspective on the current pandemic situation. He also apprised the community of the current precautions being undertaken by medical practitioners and healthcare facilities to reduce the risk of spreading CoViD-19 to their patients/clients.

In his closing remarks, Consul General Cruz took the opportunity to commend the Filipino community organizations for their commitment to providing assistance to our *kababayan* and assured them of the Consulate General's continued support for their programs. END.

