



PRESS RELEASE

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FILIPINOS AND SWISS CELEBRATE 109TH PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY, FLAG RAISING CEREMONY IN ZURICH & BERNE



Ambassador Falcon gives her progressive remarks on pragmatic freedom, "one that allows Filipinos to stand on their beliefs without stepping on others' toes, a freedom that encourages them to reach out to those who are in need."

14 June 2007 — Philippine Ambassador to Switzerland Minerva Jean A. Falcon reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that on 10 June 2007, more than 1,000 Filipinos, together with their Swiss spouses, children, and the officials of the Philippine Embassy in Berne, Philippine Permanent Mission in Geneva, and the Philippine Tourism Office in Frankfurt, commemorated the 109th Independence Day Anniversary at Dietikon, Zurich with a lively parade of colors, cultural shows, and Philippine culinary delights, all in the spirit of harmony and unity relevant to this year's Independence Day theme, "*Sama-sama tayo tungo sa Pag-asenso*".

The celebration started at 11:00 a.m. with a Catholic Mass officiated by the Filipino Catholic Chaplain in German-speaking cantons of Switzerland, Fr. Johan Dumandan, who reminded the Filipinos of their active role in nation building not only through prayers, but also through their healthy relations with their fellowmen.

Ambassador Falcon, who opened the afternoon program by leading the parade of colors to the stage, inspired the audience with her brief, but progressive remarks focusing on pragmatic freedom, "one that allows Filipinos to stand on their beliefs without stepping on others' toes, a freedom that encourages them to reach out to those who are in need." She also thanked the Filipinos and the Swiss for their unswerving dedication to helping the Philippines in its developmental programs and in times of emergencies.



Bibak Switzerland, a cultural group, entertains the more than 1,000 Filipinos and Swiss guests during the 109th Philippine Independence Day Anniversary Celebration in Zurich.

The celebration, which lasted up to 7:00 p.m., also featured a fund-raising lunch over sumptuous Filipino cuisine and the drawing of door prizes, colorful ethnic dances, and a choreographed play on Philippine practices and customs, where the performers included Swiss nationals and second-generation Filipinos. Funds collected during the event will be used for charitable national projects in the Philippines.

On 12 June, the Embassy in Berne hosted the Filipino community with an early morning *merienda* after the Independence Day Flag Raising Ceremony at the Chancery. END