

**MORE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS
PARTICIPATE IN *PAGKIKITA SA KONSULADO***

As the monthly meet-up with Filipino community leaders and members picks up this year, the Philippine Consulate General is set to have at its "*Ika-6 na Pagkikita sa Konsulado*" on Wednesday, March 18, guests from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Chicago Regional Office.

The Consulate has inked a Memorandum of Understanding with the NLRB in order to, among others, develop and provide a training and education program for Filipino workers, their employers and Filipino business owners on the rights, protections and obligations under the National Labor Relations Act.



Consul General Generoso D.G. Calonge (center) with Ms. Diann Rodriguez, Acting Deputy Assistant Director for Trade Operations and Acting Deputy Director for Base Metals CEE (left) and Mr. Joseph Kolb, Program Manager, Admissibility Passenger and Programs (right).

At the previous *Pagkikita* on February 18, the Consulate hosted Ms. Diann Rodriguez and Mr. Joseph Kolb from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Chicago Field Office who discussed the CBP's immigration and travel-related programs as well as personal and commercial shipment issues. Companies engaged in cargo forwarding, such as LBC and T-Bar, attended the meeting. The CBP officers also clarified common questions on restricted items.

As it coincided with Ash Wednesday, the Consulate's officers and staff, led by Consul General and Madame Gloria Calonge, took the opportunity to offer the Holy Mass just before the meeting in honor of the 44 Special Action Force commandos who were killed in the operation that resulted in the death of international terrorist Julkifli Bin Hir aka Marwan in Mamasapano, Maguindanao. Fr. Carlos Llagas, SJ presided over the Eucharistic celebration.



Consul General Calonge reads the Second Reading for the Ash Wednesday liturgy held at the Kalayaan Hall of the Consulate, as photos of the SAF 44 heroes are flashed on the screen; Fr. Llagas, SJ (second from left) flanked by Deputy Consul General Romulo Victor Israel Jr. and Consul General and Madame Gloria Calonge after the mass.

Consul General Generoso D.G. Calonge said that the Consulate's MOU with NLRB also enables the Consulate to refer complaints from Filipino workers to the agency. Under said agreement, the upcoming activity is one way of promoting greater access among Filipino workers and business owners to the NLRB resources and services. He added that he would like leaders of community organizations to encourage young professionals and those graduating and will be entering the labor market this year to attend and hear the NLRB presentation.

Consul General Calonge said he is hopeful that, through the continued outreach and partnership of various U.S. government agencies, more Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in Chicago and the rest of the Consulate's jurisdiction would raise their level of awareness and appreciation of their rights and benefits under relevant laws and help spread the same to their families, friends and co-workers. **END**