

GMA to wear eco-friendly dress at SONA

There will be something old, something new and something borrowed for President Arroyo when she delivers her State of the Nation Address on Monday.

Mrs. Arroyo will wear a reddish pink gown made of Philippine indigenous material designed by longtime presidential fashion designer JC Buendia.

The modern Filipiniana gown will be a blend of silk from Misamis Oriental and pineapple fibers produced in Aklan.

The fabrics, produced through the PTRI-DOST Technological Center, were dyed with extracts from *Cocos nucifera* (young coconut) husks.

The President will also wear a pink quartz zircon brooch with complementary earrings, heirloom pieces given to her by her late mother, former First Lady Eva Macapagal.

Presidential Management Staff (PMS) chief Secretary Cerge Remonde said Mrs. Arroyo's attire will be in accordance with her campaign to protect the environment.

"She's going to wear a JC Buendia-designed gown and it will be made of native materials," Remonde said when asked what the President would be wearing when she delivers her SONA.

"It's going to be elegant and it's also her way of helping the environment and showing to the whole world Filipino creativity," he said.

"She's going to be wearing something that's going to be native and precisely to high-

light that Filipino fashion could have a place under the international fashion sun," he said.

When pressed for details, he said: "I'm not a fashion consultant, I'm just PMS."

Mrs. Arroyo wore a similar eco-friendly dress earlier this month during the anniversary of the Department of Science and Technology, which developed the organic dyes made from indigenous plants like coconut.

The dress that she wore was designed by US-based Filipino designer Anthony Legarda and would be marketed in Europe and the US.

A dress like that could cost as much as \$3,000, the designer said.

The same type of materials were used to clothe visiting heads of state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations earlier this year.

Remonde said he does not know how much the gown costs but said Mrs. Arroyo was "tight-fisted."

He said she has been setting aside time every day to work on her SONA.

Remonde, who is helping in the preparation of the speech, said they finished work at 1 a.m. on Thursday.

He said Mrs. Arroyo might make her final rehearsal tomorrow night. — Joanne Zapanta-Andrada, Paolo Romero

