

# GMA invites Rudd to speak in Manila forum

President Arroyo has invited Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to speak before the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development, and the Philippine-Australian Ministerial Meeting (PAMM) in Manila on October.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo said the Mrs. Arroyo extended her invitation to during their bilateral meeting Saturday afternoon at the Asia Hotel, her official residence during her three-day working visit to China.

"The President invited Prime Minister Rudd to address the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development," he said in a statement released by Malacañang.

"Of course, we are going to have also our Philippine-Australian Ministerial Meeting in October and they both agreed that this would be a good time for Prime Minister Rudd to visit the Philippines."

Romulo said foreign office officials of the Philippines and Australia will work out a suitable arrangement for Rudd's trip to Manila to coincide with the holding of the forum on migration and the PAMM.

Romulo said the forum is a good opportunity to tackle immigration issues between the Philippines and Australia and ensure that the interests and welfare of the nationals of the sending and receiving countries will be respected and protected.

"So it will be an opportune time for Australia to be in the 2nd Global Forum in as much as this meeting (concerns) both the sending and receiving countries," he said.

About 200,000 Filipinos, mostly professionals such as engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers and business people, are living in Australia, he added.

— Paolo Romero