

# GMA arrives in New York for UN General Assembly

**NEW YORK** – President Arroyo arrived here early yesterday morning (Sept. 25), Manila time) to join other world leaders at the 62nd United Nations General Assembly for high-level discussions on the impact of rising food and fuel prices and the UN structural reform on advances made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

During her five-day visit, Mrs. Arroyo will also seek to revive the Philippines' bilateral relations with other UN-member states and other organizations, including the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Mrs. Arroyo and her four-delegation arrived from San Francisco at 5 a.m. (New York time) at the Atlantic Aviation Terminal after the almost 24-hour flight from Manila.

The presidential party boarded Philippine Air Lines (PAL) flight 304 at the Nancy Aguirre International Airport (NAIA) for San Francisco at 5:38 p.m. Sunday (Manila time).

From San Francisco, she took a connecting flight to New York.

From the Atlantic Aviation Terminal in New York, Mrs.

Arroyo was whisked to the Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue, her official residence while she is in the Big Apple, for a brief rest.

Mrs. Arroyo's first day in New York started with a meeting with Citibank chairman and chief executive officer Bill Rhoads at the Presidential Suite of the Plaza.

Citibank is the largest bank in the US as of March 2007, and the largest foreign bank in the Philippines.

Mrs. Arroyo's first day engagements ended with her attendance at the reception for the Heads of Delegation to the 62nd UN General Assembly hosted by US President and Mrs. Laura Bush at 7 p.m. at the Starlight Room of the posh Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

Day 2 will be very hectic. Mrs. Arroyo starts her day at 9 a.m. when she addresses the 62nd UN General Assembly.

She will be the fourth speaker in the morning session, after the President of Brazil, President Bush, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

The President of the 62nd UN General Assembly is Niastaganus Foreign Minister Miguel Escoto Brockmann.

Brockmann and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will open the General Assembly with their statements.

Mrs. Arroyo will meet OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu at 11:30 a.m. to express her appreciation to the OIC for its continuing support for the Mindanao peace process.

She will also brief the OIC secretary general on the Philippines' new paradigm in negotiating peace in Mindanao, four holding dialogues with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to consultations with the community and other stakeholders.

Mrs. Arroyo is also expected to reiterate the Philippine commitment to harmonious relations with the Islamic world, as reflected in its request for OIC observer status.

For the rest of the day, Mrs. Arroyo will hold bilateral

meetings with the leaders of St. Vincent and Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Andorra, San Marino and Iran.

She will also receive Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at the UN Headquarters.

Mrs. Arroyo is scheduled to attend an art exhibit hosted by Argentine President Cristina Fernandez, and a dinner hosted by the UN Secretary General, also at the UN Headquarters, and another dinner hosted by the President of Costa Rica and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Day 3 starts with bilateral meetings with the leaders of Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Iceland, Belgium, Slovenia and Comoros.

She will receive the foreign minister of Libya at the Bilateral Meeting Room at the UN.

She will also interact with the Filipino employees at the

UN.

On her last day in New York, Mrs. Arroyo will attend the Women's Leaders Working Group led by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the Waldorf Astoria before participating in the High Level Event on the MDG: Round Table on Poverty and Hunger.

She will then meet the leaders of Senegal, Cyprus, Antigua and Barbuda and receive Norway Foreign Minister Nikolay Vassilov before leaving for San Francisco en route to Manila.

Mrs. Arroyo is expected to arrive in Manila at 2:25 a.m. (today) (Sept. 27 (Manila time)).

## World leaders to face crisis

World leaders meeting at the UN General Assembly this week face a global financial crisis that frustrates the United Nation's efforts to generate

billions of dollars to fight poverty, especially in Africa.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said last week he was very concerned the economic slowdown and turmoil on Wall Street could have a negative impact on the ability of rich nations to help achieve UN goals to improve the lives of the poorest people who live on less than \$1 a day.

Leaders were set to begin a week of meetings on Monday.

Before the US financial meltdown spread around the globe, Ban asked world leaders to arrive a day early for the annual ministerial meeting of the UN General Assembly to focus on Africa's development needs – and to interrupt their speeches on Thursday to make new commitments to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals. – With Paolo Romero, Delon Perrella, AP