

GMA back from Egypt trip today

By MARVIN SY

President Arroyo returns home today after two days in Egypt to attend the 15th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit.

The Chief Executive will land in Awang Airport in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao at 1:30 p.m. to inspect projects in the province.

She will later preside over an anti-terrorism council meeting in Cotabato City.

After planeside honors, Mrs. Arroyo will have a ceremonial drive through the airport access road project.

She will then lead the inauguration of the new airport waiting area.

From Maguindanao, Mrs. Arroyo will proceed to Cotabato City for the anti-terrorism council meeting.

The President was supposed to visit Cotabato City last week, but it was cancelled because of concerns over her security following the series of bombings in the region.

Mrs. Arroyo attended the NAM summit as the designated spokesperson for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Deputy presidential spokesman Anthony Golez said NAM representatives were "bedazzled" by Mrs. Arroyo's participation in the functions and welcomed her speech at the opening session last Wednesday.

In her speech, Mrs. Arroyo noted that interfaith dialogue will be the main thrust in the special NAM ministerial meeting in Manila this year.

During yesterday's general debate, Mrs. Arroyo noted that there are five key areas where the NAM can take the lead in forging international solidarity for peace and development.

The President said the international community must take decisive and sustained actions to address the worst global economic crisis in the post-war era.

"The most important thing we have learned is that our economies are closely interconnected," she said.

"We sink or swim as one. In the face of this grave situation, we need to strengthen South-South cooperation. We need to enhance regional and sub-regional efforts."

On efforts to stop climate change, Mrs. Arroyo said the NAM must send a message to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"The industrialized countries must decide, before the Copenhagen meeting, on the range of their carbon emission reduction targets," she said.

"We must call on all countries, but most importantly the major industrialized nations and the rest of the developed world, to live up to their UNFCCC obligations, particularly those related to access to affordable and appropriate technology and funding for climate change management programs."

On interfaith dialogue, Mrs. Arroyo said it is es-

sential "if we are to end" the disagreements between faiths and between cultures that are killing so many innocent people worldwide.

The ministerial meeting in Manila later this year "will mark the first time that NAM will harness the great potentials of interfaith dialogue and cooperation to advance our concerns for a durable and lasting peace and sustainable development," she added.