

# GMA to hold final meeting with outgoing Cabinet officials

By PAOLO ROMERO

a result) resigned upon filing of COC on or before Nov. 30, 2009 for the 2010 elections."

"Verily, there is now a compelling need for the Honorable Court to step in and resolve the controversy for the benefit

not only of the petitioners and those similarly situated, but for the COMELEC as well.

"It is true that the first and fundamental duty of courts is to apply the law. However, when application becomes

impossible or inadequate, as in this case, the Honorable Court should not deny the parties the exercise of its powers of construction and interpretation," stated the 44-page comment signed by Solicitor General Agnes Doronadas.

"In this connection, the implementation of Section 4 (1) of COMELEC Resolution 9679 which only covers Section 13 of RA 9309 (Poll Automation Law) should accordingly be restrained," the OSG added.

—With Eds Perez

President Arroyo will hold today in Bonayac her final meeting with outgoing Cabinet officials who will resign for various local and national posts in the May 2010 elections.

1 Deputy presidential spokesperson Loreto Fajardo, however, said there would be no deadline or farewell party but "only work" during the Cabinet meeting.

Fajardo said the agenda of the Cabinet meeting, include the bi-weekly Global Resilience Impact News, the update of the Special Public-Private Reconstruction Commission, and the report of the Pro-Performance teams, headed by Presidential Management Staff chief Herenegren Espenon.

2 Espenon, who is seeking a congressional seat representing the sixth district of Pangasinan, is in charge of monitoring all priority projects of the administration.

Fajardo and Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said there are no arrangements for a farewell party for the resigning Cabinet officials. Bello himself is deciding whether to run for Congress, representing Sabala, or seek a Senate seat.

3 Mrs. Arroyo is expected to return to Manila after karsh. She is scheduled to be in Guang, Pangasinan later in the afternoon.

Fajardo said the meeting was held in Bonayac because the President is scheduled to meet with some Syrian diplomats who are billeted at the Shangri-La Hotel there.

4 Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is expected to lead the column of officials from the Cabinet in the coming days.

5 Ermita said he is strongly considering returning to his previous congressional seat in the first district of Batangas.

6 He said his daughter, Batangas Rep. Eileen Ermita-Pulsan, is already ending her third and last term at the House of Representatives and it's either he or his youngest daughter Lisa who would take her place.

7 He said he and Presidential Advisor for Political Affairs Gabriel Canalis counted some 15 Cabinet members who are expected to resign on or before the deadline of the filing of their certificates of candidacy on Dec. 1.

8 Other Cabinet officials expected to resign are Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Bayani

Fernando, who is running for president; Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Raul Gonzalez, who is running for senator; Kampi-CMD; Tourism Secretary Arc Durano, for senator under the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC); Energy Secretary Augusto Bayan, for mayor of Laguna City; Education Secretary Jodi Lapos, for a seat in the third congressional district of Tarlac (NPC); Budget Secretary Rolando Arellano Jr. for a seat in the first district of Camarines Sur under the Liberal Party; Technical Education and Skills Development Authority chairman Augusto Selyaco Jr. for a seat in the second district in Bicol (Lakas-Kampi-CMD); Agriculture Secretary Arbur Yap for the third district in Bicol (Lakas-Kampi-CMD); Environment Secretary Josefa Adorata for Manila mayor (Liberal Party); Deputy National Security Adviser Luis Singson for governor in Bicol Sur (Lakas-Kampi-CMD); Land Transportation Office chairman Arturo Lomboa for the second district in Pangasinan; and Press Undersecretary Anthony Galar for a seat in Bacolod's lone district (NPC).

9 Other Cabinet officials who either resigned for next year's elections are Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard-bearer former defense secretary Gilbert Teodoro, former National Economic and Development Authority director general Ralph Recto, to run for senator under the LP; former presidential press adviser Avelino Razon Jr. for Manila mayor under NPC; and former public works chief Herenegren Espenon for president.

10 Meanwhile, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) has asked the Supreme Court (SC) to temporarily stop the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) from implementing its rule on mandatory resignation of appointed officials who plan to join next year's national polls upon filing of their certificates of candidacy (COC).

11 In a comment filed yesterday, the OSG said there is a valid controversy raised in the petition of election lawyer Ramula Macalintal that would warrant issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) against implementation of section 4(a) of Resolution 9679 of COMELEC, which provides that any appointive government official "shall be ipso facto (as