

COMELEC Thanks DFA for Its Contributions to the Successful Conduct
of the 2019 Midterm Elections Overseas

20 August 2019 – The Commission on Elections-Office for Overseas Voting (COMELEC-OFOV) conducted a Thanksgiving and Commendation Luncheon for the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in appreciation of its contribution to the success of the May 2019 National and Local Elections on 15 August 2019, at the Red Jade, Manila Hotel.

Present at the event were COMELEC Commissioner-in-Charge for Overseas Voting Ma. Rowena Guanzon, Commissioner Al Parreño, Commissioner Marlon Casquejo, and other COMELEC officials. Among those who attended from DFA were Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security and Consular Concerns Senior Special Assistant Roy B. Ebraela, who represented Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin Jr., Assistant Secretary Maria Lumen B. Isleta from the Office of American Affairs, Acting Vice-Chairman Edgardo O. Castro from the Overseas Voting Secretariat, and other officials and staff.

The DFA-Overseas Voting Secretariat (DFA-OVS) was awarded a plaque of appreciation for its invaluable support, guidance, and partnership with the Commission in the conduct of election activities for overseas voting in the 2019 National and Local Elections

Atty. Ebraela delivered the Secretary's remarks wherein the DFA extended its gratitude to COMELEC for "providing cash advance to cover for the postage funds for the mailing of the ballots to overseas voters of Foreign Service Posts (FSPs) who employed Postal Voting; providing guidance and technical expertise in the operations of Vote Counting Machines and the transmission of election results; providing administrative and operational assistance during the conduct of the 30-day voting period; and continuing support for the promotion of overseas voting."

In addition, since overseas voting (OV) is still a work in progress, it was proposed that the "COMELEC included guidelines or policy for the reverse logistics of all OV-related equipment, materials, and paraphernalia after the conclusion of each OV registration/election exercise. Another recommendation is to include in the appropriation of DFA-OVS funds/budget all the expenses related to FSP's implementation of overseas voting, except for Honoraria, registration and election equipment, and accountable forms and materials in order to minimize, if not totally eliminate, FSPs problems regarding storage and the tedious process of reimbursing cash advances made by Foreign Service Posts in the implementation of the said law."

Apart from DFA-OVS, the event also recognized the following Foreign Service Posts (FSPs):

- **Largest Percentage of Voters Turn-Out for Posts Adopting a Manual Election System:**
 - Philippine Consulate General in Chongqing with a total of 96 voters out of 122 or 50%
 - Philippine Consulate General in Geneva with a total of 1,244 voters out of 2,533 or 48.32%
 - Philippine Embassy in Yangon with a total of 244 voters out of 527 or 46.30%

- **Largest Percentage of Voters Turn-Out for Posts Adopting an Automated Election System:**
 - Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong with a total of 36,010 voters out of 87,969 or 40.93%
 - Philippine Embassy in Canberra with a total of 1,820 voters out of 5,602 or 32.49%
 - Philippine Embassy in Singapore with a total of 24,989 voters out of 78,488 or 31.84%

- **Early Transmission of Election Results** (This refers to the completed transmission of election results to the National Board of Canvassers at the Philippine International Convention Center)
 - Philippine Embassy in Brunei for completely transmitting election results on 14 May 2019 at exactly 2:13 A.M.
 - Philippine Embassy in Athens for completely transmitting election results on 14 May 2019 at exactly 3:52 A.M.
 - Philippine Embassy in Singapore for completely transmitting the election results on 14 May at exactly 6:48 A.M.

With the previous elections behind and as a new registration cycle approaches, the Department of Foreign Affairs is proud to report that the 2019 National and Local Elections had the highest voter turn-out for a midterm election and the second highest only to the 2016 Presidential Elections since the implementation of Philippine Overseas Voting– **END**