

PH Embassy gives Territorial Dispute Lecture to HS students

Written By: Maryam Anuar

The **Philippine Embassy** in Qatar held a lecture about the Philippine and China territorial sea conflict entitled *“Intellectual Discourse 2023: Seven Years Hence the South China Sea Arbitration Award of 2016 and the Primary of the Rules-based International Order”* for the Grade 10 and Senior High School students at the Edgar V. Bondoc Gymnasium of Philippine School Doha on September 28.

The lecture was graced by **Her Excellency Ambassador Lilibeth Pono**, Philippine Ambassador to Qatar, wherein she recognized September as the **Maritime and Archipelagic Nation Awareness Month** or the ‘‘ManaMo’’ with the theme ‘‘*Kapuluan, Kabuluhan, Kaunlaran*’’ (Archipelago, Significance, and Development). This year emphasized the identity of the Philippine maritime issues and the significance of the archipelago towards sustainable development. Pono also amplified the importance of a discourse regarding the Philippines’ maritime controversy to further comprehend an individual’s rights towards the land and sea as a citizen of the Philippines.

Third Secretary and Vice Consul Jeffrey D. Batac served as the main speaker of the said event. Batac reviewed the key events that led the Philippine Government to file a case against China in accordance with one of the dispute settlement mechanisms under the 1982 **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**. Additionally, he addressed the key positions of the Philippines and China, assessing the impact of the decision of the arbitral award on the overall situation in the South China Sea and the Philippines’ relations with China. As he concluded his lecture, Batac stressed that:

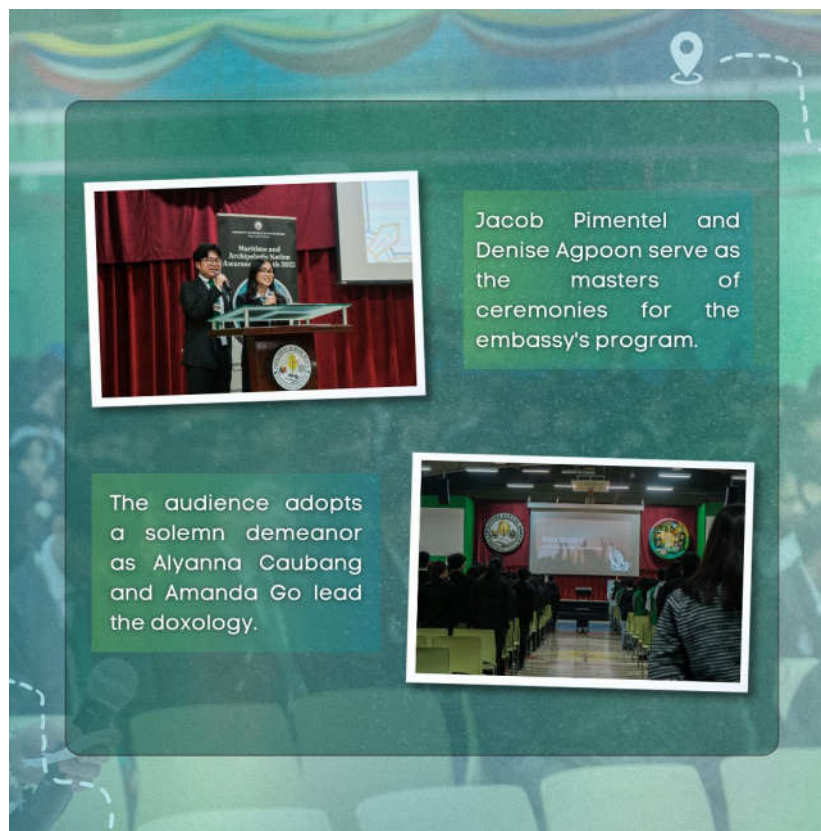
“Whether it’s inaccurate maps showing the 9-dash line in Hollywood movies or inaccurate drawings sold on Lazada or Shopee or problematic statement by seating officials, we all have an obligation to make sure that we are aware of what is legal and what is right and what is consistent with international law.”

The reception of the Murilig Velarde map from the Philippine Embassy was then done along with Ambassador Pono, School Principal Dr. Alexander Acosta, and the various vice-principals from different departments.

In his closing remarks, **Dr. Acosta** reminded the students about their rights according to the constitutions gifted upon them. He also highlighted that as future leaders, students should never fall into the oppression of opposers and never stop fighting for what is theirs. As descendants of their forefathers, students should preserve and protect the land of the country. Dr. Acosta further stated that:

“This is a reflection that if we assert our rights into use, no one can step on us.”

It was in 2013 that The Republic of the Philippines filed a case on the UNCLOS against the People's Republic of China, claiming that China’s 9-dash line disrupted the sovereignty of the Filipinos due to unlawful activities, like fishing illegally and building artificial lands. In the end, the 2016 Arbitral Award was granted in favor of the Philippines.





Her Excellency Ambassador Lilibeth V. Pono graces the lecture with her welcoming remarks.

Third Secretary and Vice Consul Jeffrey D. Batac discusses the events that culminated in the Philippine Government's decision to file a case against China.



Vice Consul Jeffrey D. Batac holds an open forum following his insightful discussion.

Marchen Docot, a student from 12-Tantalum, asks about how the global community can uphold the verdict of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.



From Left: Dr. Noemi Formaran, Dr. Alexander S. Acosta, Vice Consul Jeffrey Batac, Mrs. Melissa Montayre, and Dr. Lorina Villanueva all gather for a photo with the embassy's gift to PSD.