



(Left photo) Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Virginia H. Benavidez delivers her ceremony of new Honorary Vice Consul for Auckland and the Upper North Island region 2013 at the Office of the Philippine Honorary Consul General located at the Central Business District, New Zealand. (Right photo) Ambassador Benavidez signs the Oath of Office of Honorary Vice Consul.

16 March 2013 - Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Virginia H. Benavidez administered the oath of office to Mrs. Virginia Russell, the new Honorary Vice Consul for Auckland and the Upper North Island regions on March 09.

The oath-taking ceremony was held at the Office of the Philippine Honorary Consul General located in Auckland's Central Business District.

The Philippine Government through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs has appointed Mrs. Russell

to this position of trust and confidence to assist Honorary Consul General Paulo Garcia in rendering consular services needed by more than 25,000 Filipinos and the visa requirements of New Zealanders and visitors under their consular jurisdiction.

Mrs. Russell would be an integral part of Team Philippines-New Zealand together with Ambassador Benavidez, Honorary Consul General Garcia in Auckland, Honorary Consul Peter Wait in Christchurch and Honorary Consul Virgilio De Asa in Fiji pursuing the three key pillars of Philippine foreign policy focusing on the preservation and enhancement of national security, promotion and attainment of economic security and protection of the rights and well-being of Filipinos in New Zealand and Fiji.

During the oath-taking ceremony, Ambassador Benavidez stated that "Mrs. Russell's appointment is part of the priority of the Philippine government to strengthen the frontline services of the Philippine Government in New Zealand for the benefit of Filipinos there.

"With Mrs. Russell's credentials, track record in successfully mounting projects for the Filipino community, her extensive networking among Filipinos, New Zealanders and other communities and her commitment and cooperation to assist in carrying out the various duties and responsibilities of honorary consular officers, she will be a valuable additional member of the Honorary Consul's team in Auckland," Ambassador Benavidez added.

"Just like Honorary Consul General Garcia, Mrs. Russell fully understands the utmost importance of adhering to the directive of President Benigno S. Aquino III for frontline services to be marked with honesty, integrity and hard work along the straight and righteous path, heeding the call of Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. del Rosario for the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and all Foreign Service Posts (FSPs) to serve with a sm

ile, go the extra mile and reach beyond our grasp and living up to the expectations of the Filipino people that public service is a public trust. This means that the Consulate's services follow the rules and regulations of and comply with the prescribed schedule of fees set by the Department of Foreign Affairs," Ambassador Benavidez said.

For Honorary Vice Consul Russell, this position of trust and confidence serving at the pleasure of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, is a great honor and reiterated her commitment to abide by

the oath she has taken and work harder and assist Honorary Consul General Garcia to continue making the Consulate a



(Photo above) Ambassador Benavidez and Honorary Consul General Garcia during the oath-taking ceremony on 9 March 2013. (Left photo below) Ms. Lina Napao, Honorary Vice Consul, Ambassador Benavidez and Honorary Consul General Garcia. Ambassador Benavidez administers the Oath of Office of Honorary Consul Russell is her husband, Sean, and her sister.

professionally run office where Filipinos, New Zealanders and clients would experience efficient and effective consular services.

“With the Philippine Embassy in Wellington as the Supervising Post and given the importance of being one as Team Philippines-New Zealand, I shall do my very best in contributing to our overall mission,” Honorary Vice Consul Russell stated.

The oath taking ceremony was witnessed by Mrs. Russell's husband, Sean, by her sister, Lina, and by her friends from various Filipino organizations and groups. END