

24 February 2010-The Department of Foreign Affairs' Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat (DFA-OAVS) and the Commission on Elections' Committee on Overseas Absentee Voting (COMELEC-COAV) are gearing up for the conduct of the May 2010 elections overseas with the Training on the Conduct of Overseas Absentee Voting, Counting and Canvassing for Purposes of the 2010 National Elections.

The training will be held on 24-26 February at the Heritage Hotel, Pasay City .

According to DFA-OAVS Chairperson and DFA Undersecretary Rafael E. Seguis, the training is the first and the biggest to be conducted before the start of OAV election on April 10.

It is going to be attended by over 100 representatives from the foreign service, especially in the Asia Pacific region, which have recommended the adoption of personal voting. Also attending are Ambassadors-designate to six countries who will be assuming their posts soon, and two incoming Heads of Consular Posts in the United States.

They will serve as members of the Electoral Boards in the Foreign Service Posts they represent. These boards are the Special Ballot Reception and Custody Group (SBRCG), the Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI), and the Special Board of Canvassers (SBOC).

The DFA and the COMELEC have been coordinating very closely to prepare for this year's important political exercise.

Aside from the training, COMELEC representatives, supported by DFA-OAVS personnel, will travel to Los Angeles and Madrid on March 11-13 to conduct training on Postal Voting for Electoral Boards of Posts in the Americas and Europe, respectively; and to Abu Dhabi and

Riyadh on March 18-20 to conduct training on Personal Voting for Electoral Boards of Posts in the Middle East and Africa and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), respectively.

The trainings in these four countries will be attended by over 200 foreign service personnel, more than half of whom will be coming from Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah and Al-Khobar).

A separate training for the automated election system (AES) in Hong Kong and Singapore will take place in the first week of April 2010. An expert from Smartmatic-TIM is currently on a visit to Hong Kong and Singapore to coordinate with the information technology focal points of the two Posts, also in preparation for the May 2010 elections.

Still on AES, COMELEC-COAV and OAVS personnel will undertake a consultation mission to Hong Kong and Singapore from February 27 to March 5 to ensure that the automated elections in said Posts will not encounter problems.

For the May 2010 elections, there are 589,830 overseas voters certified by the Resident Election Registration Board (RERB) of COMELEC. END