

# PRESS RELEASE



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### **EMBASSY STRENGTHENS COOPERATION WITH ACRATH TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

In efforts to better understand and respond to human trafficking cases, the Philippine Embassy invited Sr. Angela Reed, RSM, and Mrs. Marietta Latonio as guest speakers on the topic “Understanding Trafficking as Exploiting Vulnerability: Giving Voice to Filipino Trafficked Women.”

The two speakers spoke during the Embassy’s *Kapihan sa Pasuguan* held on 13 February 2015 and shared with the personnel the highlights of a 2011 study they had conducted on trafficking of Filipino women in Cebu.

The Embassy and the speakers exchanged views on the strengths, challenges and best practices on how best to address the issue of human trafficking cases in Australia.

Ambassador Belen F. Anota reiterated the Embassy’s commitment to strengthen cooperation and to continue networking with Sr. Reed, who is affiliated with Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), particularly on assistance to nationals cases involving domestic violence and human trafficking.

Sr Angela Reed, a sister of Mercy, has coordinated ‘Mercy Care,’ a safe house for women escaping family violence in Victoria for 7 years. In 2008 she was awarded a Vincent Fairfax Fellowship in Ethics and Leadership through St James Ethics Centre, which required her and 13 other Australians to explore ethical issues across Australia and the Asia Pacific. In 2011 she spent 6 months in the Philippines undertaking the field work component of her PhD research on domestic sex trafficking. She recently completed her PhD research into Human Trafficking through the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne and has embarked on a mission to ensure that the findings of her research are shared widely. She is currently working on written resource materials for trafficked women.

Mrs Marietta Latonio has worked with the Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines for over 20 years. She has served as director of many welfare programs including the implementation of community-based and centre-based programs in the Southern Philippines. In recent years, Mrs Latonio has worked for a number of NGOs focusing on the welfare of women and children. She is currently employed as the Monitoring and Evaluation officer at the Good Shepherd Welcome House in Cebu which provides support to trafficked women. She is also employed as director of community outreach extension services for the University of the Southern Philippines Foundation and also lectures in the faculty of social work. Her recent trip to Australia is to continue to work in her role as a Bi-Cultural researcher with Sr Angela Reed and co-author resource materials for trafficked women.



Embassy personnel listen to Sr. Angela Reed and Mrs. Marietta Latonia, guest speakers at the Kapihan sa Pasuguan on 13 February 2014.



Sr. Angela Reed and Mrs. Marietta Latonio share the findings of their research on “Understanding Trafficking as Exploiting Vulnerability: Giving Voice to Filipino Trafficked Women.”



Ambassador Belen F. Anota extends her appreciation and gives Certificates of Appreciation to Sr. Angela Reed (photo above) and Mrs. Marietta Latonio (photo below) for sharing their knowledge and experiences on combatting human trafficking.

