

EMBASSY LAUNCHES ‘VISIT PHILIPPINES AGAIN 2016’ IN IRAQ

BAGHDAD—The Philippine Embassy is hoping to convince more Iraqis to travel to Manila in the coming months following the launching of the Visit the Philippines Again 2016 tourism promotion program in Baghdad.

The launching of the sequel to the Department of Tourism’s successful Visit the Philippines 2015 program was the highlight of the reception the Philippine Embassy hosted on Wednesday to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Iraq.

Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Elmer G. Cato said there definitely was great interest among not only Iraqis but also foreign diplomats who attended the reception at the Babylon Hotel to visit the Philippines after seeing the video presentation showing the various tourism destinations the country has to offer.

“We hope that the sneak preview convinced many of you to go and experience for yourselves why it’s more fun in the Philippines,” Chargé d’Affaires Cato said after the video presentation that showcased such popular tourist destinations as Boracay, Cebu, Bohol, Palawan, Siargao, Vigan, Albay, Davao, Banaue, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro.

Among those who are planning to visit the Philippines is Dr. Karim Wasfi, principal conductor of the Iraq National Symphony Orchestra. “After seeing what you just showed us, I now want to live in the Philippines,” Dr. Wasfi told Chargé d’Affaires Cato.

Aside from members of the diplomatic corps and Iraqi officials and business leaders, also in attendance at the reception were representatives from various airlines and major travel agencies who offered to help the Embassy promote the Philippines as a holiday destination to their clients.

“We will be working with the airlines and travel agencies in the coming weeks so that we could start bringing Iraqi tourists in,” Chargé d’Affaires Cato said, adding that the Embassy will do as much as it can to make it easier for Iraqis to obtain visas to allow them to visit the country.

Last year, the Embassy issued a total of 206 visas to Iraqi nationals who wanted to go to the the Philippines for business or pleasure. “We will definitely work hard this year to ensure an increase in tourist arrivals from Iraq,” Chargé d’Affaires Cato.

Aside from the video presentation, the Embassy distributed abaca bags with chocolate mangoes from Cebu, USB cards from the Clark Development Corporation and brochures from the Department of

Tourism to give guests a better appreciation of the
Philippines. ###