OCTOBER 2025

NEWSLETTER

Association of Former International Civil Servants - Philippines

President's Message



Alcestis A. Mangahas
President
AFICS-PHL 2024-2026

Welcome to this Special Edition of the AFICS-PHL Newsletter, a double issue in time for the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations!

Our celebrations go into high gear this last quarter of 2025 with important milestones: the Grand Reunion of UN Retirees, Associates, and Friends (October 17, 2025), a publication on members (Eighty for 80), equally important, our first ever AFICS-PHL Policy Forum on the subject of the United Nations and multilateralism.

I have been asked often enough why AFICS-PHL is celebrating the UN's 80th Anniversary, especially at this time of critical organizational reforms and declining contributions of a major donor. Budgetary cutbacks and premature terminations have marked this season. However, it is exactly at this time of vulnerability that it is even more important to focus attention on the UN global achievements. Our Filipino retirees provide wonderful testimony to the UN's long-term efforts towards peace, security, and development.

Our AFICS-PHL has had a very busy and vibrant 2025. We continue to expand our membership (we now number 283 members). While not awash with resources, we are less dependent on membership fees to sustain the financial health of the organization. The AFICS-PHL Tours and Travel is increasingly popular. The 10-day Moroccan adventure in March 2025 and the forthcoming trip to Northern Thailand in November have reinforced confidence in our specially curated travel itineraries.

Services to members will always be fundamental—we provide counsel and advice to members in their dealings with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). We reached out to members whose UNJSPF pension benefits would have been suspended. Pursuing our members' concerns relating to their health insurance providers, we prepared a short paper documenting members' concerns and reported the findings at the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) Council Meeting in July 2025. We look forward to their positive follow-up action.

Our members continue to engage in many other activities featured in this newsletter.

May we continue to be blessed.

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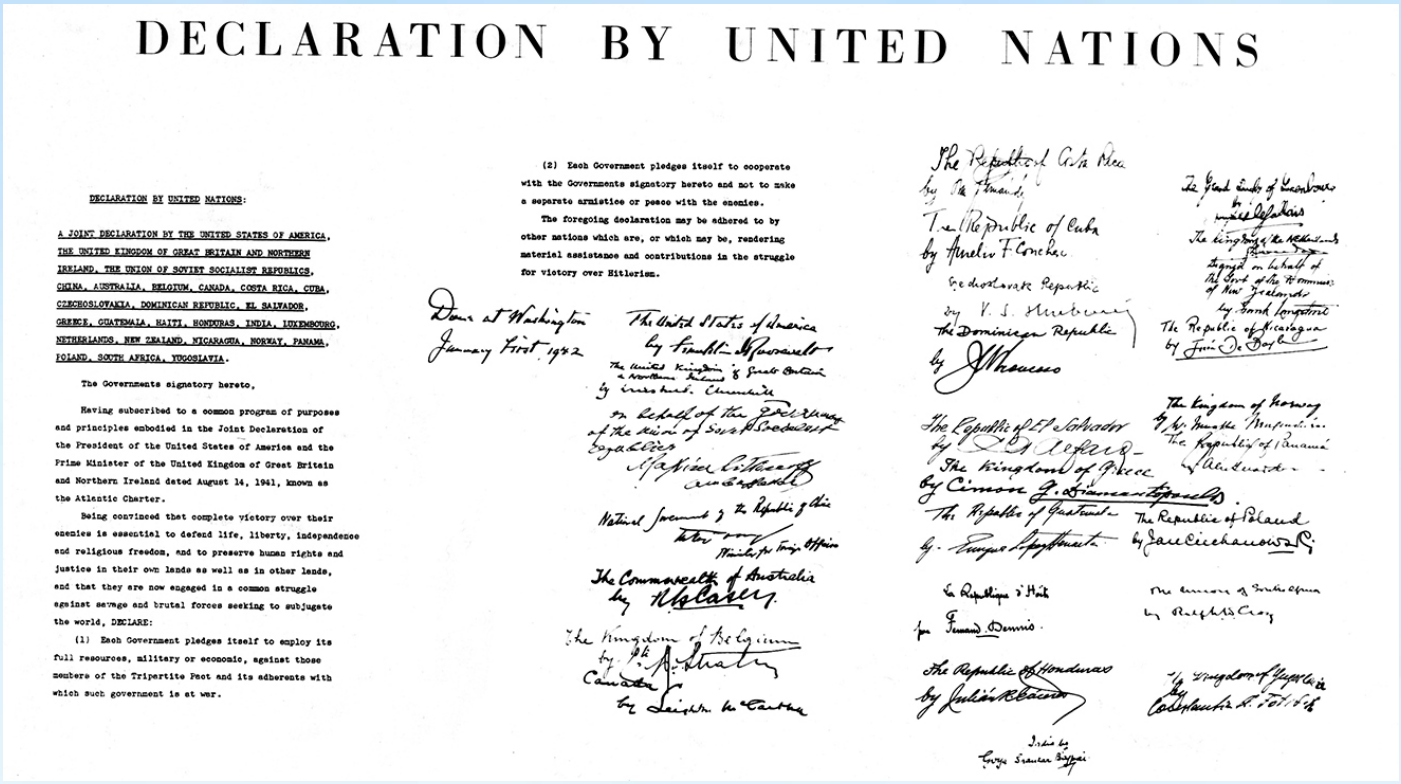
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DECLARATION BY UNITED NATIONS

DECLARATION BY UNITED NATIONS:

A JOINT DECLARATION BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, CHINA, AUSTRALIA, BELGIUM, CANADA, COSTA RICA, CUBA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EL SALVADOR, GREECE, GUATEMALA, HAITI, HONDURAS, INDIA, LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, NICARAGUA, NORWAY, PANAMA, POLAND, SOUTH AFRICA, YUGOSLAVIA.

The Governments signatory hereto,

Having subscribed to a common program of purposes and principles embodied in the Joint Declaration of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland dated August 14, 1941, known as the Atlantic Charter,

Being convinced that complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands, and that they are now engaged in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world, DECLARE:

(1) Each Government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such government is at war.

(2) Each Government pledges itself to cooperate with the Governments signatory hereto and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies.

The foregoing declaration may be adhered to by other nations which are, or which may be, rendering material assistance and contributions in the struggle for victory over Hitlerism.

Done at Washington January First 1942

The United States of America by Franklin D. Roosevelt

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by Winston Churchill

On behalf of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Commonwealth of Australia by R.G. Casey

The Kingdom of Belgium by [illegible]

Canada by Leighton McCarthy

The Republic of Costa Rica by [illegible]

The Republic of Cuba by Aurelio F. Concheso

The Czechoslovak Republic by V. S. Hurban

The Dominican Republic by J. Troncoso

The Republic of El Salvador by [illegible]

The Kingdom of Greece by Cimon P. Diamantopoulos

The Republic of Guatemala by [illegible]

La République d'Haïti par Fernand Dennis

The Republic of Honduras by Julián R. Cáceres

Done by Luys Fernan Bayo

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg by [illegible]

The Kingdom of the Netherlands signed on behalf of the Government of New Zealand by Frank Langstone

The Republic of Nicaragua by Luis De Boy

The Kingdom of Norway by [illegible]

The Republic of Panama by [illegible]

The Republic of Poland by Jan Ciechanowski

The Union of South Africa by Ralph S. Close

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia by [illegible]

Celebrating 80 Years of the United Nations: A Look Back and the Philippines' Historic Role

By Lois Villanueva

As AFICS Philippines (AFICS-PHL) celebrates the 80th anniversary of the United Nations (UN), it looks at how the world continues to face a complex web of global challenges: geopolitical tensions, pandemics, inequality, digital disruption, and an escalating climate crisis. The need for a strong and effective UN has never been more urgent.

The UN is a global institution created in the aftermath of World War II to promote peace, development, and cooperation among nations. Over the past eight decades, the UN has played a pivotal role in addressing some of humanity's most pressing challenges — from international conflicts and humanitarian crises to climate change and sustainable development.

The Birth of the United Nations

The United Nations was officially established on October 24, 1945, when the UN Charter —the founding document — was ratified by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council: China, France, the Soviet Union (now Russia), the United Kingdom, and the United States.



The Philippines, represented by Carlos P. Romulo, was one of the original 51 countries that signed the UN Charter.

This came after the horrors of two world wars made it clear that a new international order was urgently needed. The predecessor to the UN, the League of Nations, had failed to prevent global conflict. The UN was therefore designed to be more robust, with a mandate to uphold international law, promote human rights, and foster social and economic development.

Continued on next page



Carlos P. Romulo is the first President of the UN General Assembly from Asia.

The Philippines: A Founding Member

As we mark this milestone, it is also a moment to reflect on the Philippines' long-standing involvement with the UN — not just as a member, but as an early advocate of its vision for a better world.

The Philippines holds the historic distinction of being one of the original 51 founding members of the United Nations. Carlos P. Romulo signed the UN Charter during the United Nations Conference on International Organization.

Although the Philippines was still a U.S. Commonwealth at the time, its inclusion as a founding member was a significant affirmation of its sovereignty and contribution to the war effort against fascism.

Romulo would later serve as the President of the Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly in 1949–1950, becoming the first Asian to hold that position—a proud moment not only for the Philippines but for the entire developing world.

Conclusion

For the Philippines, this anniversary is an opportunity to renew its commitment to multilateralism and global cooperation. As a middle-income country with a growing voice in regional and global affairs, the Philippines has and can continue to contribute meaningfully to global discussions on peace, justice, sustainability, development goals, climate action, and human rights. As we honor the past, may we also look ahead to a world where the spirit of the United Nations thrives more strongly in every corner of the globe.

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AFICS-PHL Hosts Series of Events to Honor UN@80

by Anna Senga

For AFICS-PHL, the UN@80 is an occasion to reaffirm our national and personal commitments to UN principles and the sustainable development goals.

"Building the Future Together" is the global theme of this year's 80th anniversary of the United Nations. The theme underscores "the UN's evolution, continued relevance, and its mission to address today's global challenges towards attaining sustainable development for all."
AFICS-PHL' has lined up three events to honor the 80th birth year of the UN. The events aim to:

- Highlight the global impact and value of the United Nations through its continuing programs and services in the Philippines;
- Highlight the contributions of Filipinos who have served in the United Nations in fulfilling its mandate all over the world; and,
- Expand the AFICS-PHL membership while deepening the active involvement of its members.

The events are the following:

Grand Reunion. The Grand Reunion on October 17, 2025 brings together at least 120 UN retirees and friends associated with the UN system, including the UN Peacekeepers. A video showcasing the UN system's contributions throughout the years is being prepared. There will be a formal programme with the UN Resident Coordinator as invited guest. It will be an afternoon of fun and camaraderie with games, raffle, and lots of singing and dancing. It will also be an event to mobilize funds for AFICS-PHL operations and activities through a Filipiniana competition, bazaar of pre-loved goods and locally-produced goods, as well as the sale of UN@80 commemorative and AFICS-PHL merchandise.

Commemorative Book. A UN@80 commemorative book is being produced to mark the occasion. It features short stories and reflections of eighty AFICS-PHL members on any of these topics: major accomplishment in their career, unforgettable experience, impact of the UN in their lives, and life lessons from the UN. The book celebrates

the richness of the experiences and a plethora of expertise that the membership of AFICS-PHL has. It is also a fitting tribute to the 80 years of the UN system's contributions to peace and sustainable development not only in the Philippines, but in other countries of the world.

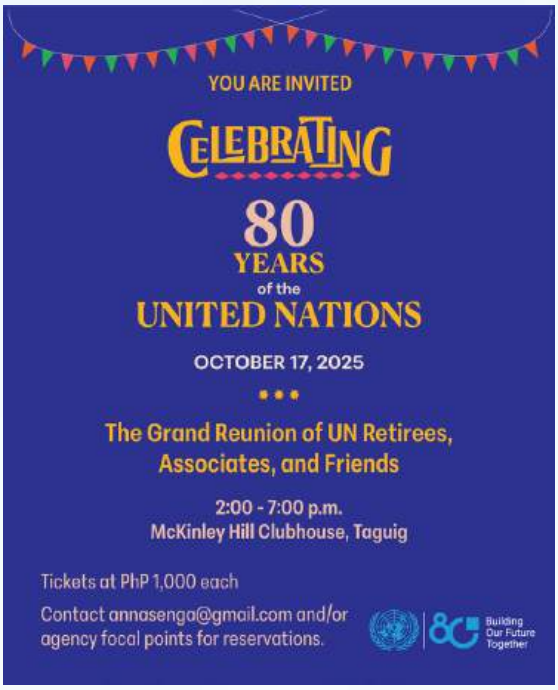
Policy Form. Lastly, multilateralism is the focus of a policy forum organized by AFICS-PHL. With the budget contraction on development and humanitarian assistance, questions on the future of multilateral policy and action are increasing. In this context, AFICS-PHL is preparing to hold a high-level forum on the topic of multilateralism in partnership with selected institutions, such as the academe, development partners, and Philippine diplomats.

We encourage all to join AFICS-PHL in celebrating the past, savouring the present, and consolidating to build a better future together.

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Grand Reunion Set to Celebrate 80th UN Anniversary

by Mi Ann Maglipon



The AFICS-PHL Task Force on the UN@80 chaired by Anna Senga has been hard at work to ensure a smooth and memorable event where former international civil servants can reconnect and celebrate.

The event is on October 17, 2025 from 2 to 7 p.m. at the McKinley Hill Homeowners Association Clubhouse.

The response has been overwhelming — with over 200 participants confirmed and tickets sold out. Preparations have covered every detail, from catering, lights, sound, and décor to the much-anticipated auction and various merchandise that will help raise funds for AFICS-PHL initiatives.

The afternoon program will unfold in three parts. The formal segment will feature messages from the AFICS-PHL President Thetis Mangahas, UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Arnaud Peral, and, speaking on behalf of UNPol, Emma Lacandula-Eblahan, who is currently assigned in Iraq. A short commemorative video will also be shown. Refreshments will be made available before the afternoon music, song and dance.

Adding a touch of fun and purpose, the auction and "Best in Attire" contest will not only spark friendly competition but also generate funds to support AFICS-PHL activities. The event will have games.

The UN@80 Task Force includes Rencee Tayzon, Imee Manal, Jana Ricasio, Lois Villanueva, Lou Rodriguez, Mi Ann Maglipon, Thelma Lampano, Thetis Mangahas, Brenda Vigo, Tony Fernandez, and Debbie Magatan.

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AFICS-PHL Launches Policy Forum on Multilateral Cooperation and the United Nations

by Ces Adorna

In celebration of the 80th year of the foundation of the United Nations, AFICS-PHL is organizing the *Policy Forum on Multilateral Cooperation and the United Nations at a Cross Roads* on 19 November 2025 from 2-6 PM at the UP School of Economics Auditorium in Diliman Quezon City.

The Policy Forum aims to celebrate the work of the United Nations in the last 80 years globally and in the Philippines; understand the challenges that UN and multilateral cooperation face worldwide and in the country; and identify important suggestions for the Philippines in navigating the current environment to fully leverage the opportunities in multilateral cooperation and the United Nations system.

The Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in the Philippines Mr. Arnaud Peral will present a brief account of the 80 years of the UN with particular focus on its work in the Philippines. Ms. Delia Albert, former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, is the Policy Forum's main speaker and

will talk on the current challenges of multilateral cooperation and the United Nations.



She will be joined by three panelists:

> Dr. Joy Abrenica, Dean of the University of the Philippines (UP) School of Economics will speak on multilateral trade, economic and sustainable development.
>
> The topic on human rights will be discussed by Dr. Mary Racelis, former Regional Director of UNICEF and currently Professorial Lecturer on Anthropology of the Ateneo de Manila University and Professor of UP.
>
> Dr. Aries Arugay, UP Political Science Professor, will talk on security and peace.

The forum will be moderated by Professor Poch Macaranas of the Asian Institute of Management, an economist and former Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs.

A senior officer of DFA Philippines will close the event providing the reflections and vision of the Philippine Government on multilateral cooperation and the United Nations.

AFICS-PHL members are encouraged to participate and confirm their participation in the event with Ms. Thelma Lampano through her Mobile No +63 949 741 2279 and email at ***equalizer2603@hotmail.com***. Details of how to join the online meeting will be announced later.

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Eighty@80: AFICS-PHL Members Share Their UN Stories

by Mi Ann Maglipon

Eighty@80 is a compilation of reflections from eighty AFICS-PHL members on their experiences working with the United Nations. The publication complements the earlier AFICS-PHL coffee table book, *Filipino Footprints in the United Nations: A Tribute to Sustainable Development*.

To begin the project, members were invited to write 100-word pieces on one of four themes: an unforgettable experience in the UN, a major accomplishment in the UN, a life lesson learned, or the impact of the UN in their lives.

The making of Eighty@80 was nothing short of a small miracle. In less than three months, two dedicated AFICS-PHL members — Delia Barcelona and Anna Senga — transformed an ambitious idea into reality. They worked tirelessly: inviting contributions, following up on delayed submissions, and editing write-ups that came in all forms and lengths. They reached out to members whose photos needed improvement, refined layouts on Canva, and navigated whether the book would remain digital or be printed. Their persistence and teamwork paid off.

Toward the final stretch, Mi Ann Maglipon and her daughter Myka Francisco joined in to finalize the layout and coordinate with Mark, the printer — ensuring that this special commemorative publication would be ready to honor the United Nations' eight decades of service and the Filipinos who have proudly shared in that mission. Limited copies are available.

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AFICS-PHL Donates Tablets to E-Dalaw Program

by Bai Bagasao

AFICS-PHL donated three Lenovo TAB M11 tablets with Tab Pens to support digital connectivity for incarcerated women under the E-Dalaw Program of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

The signing of the Deed of Donation and Turn-Over of Equipment was held on September 17, 2025, at the BJMP National Capital Region (NCR) Conference Room in Quezon City.

The E-Dalaw Project enables Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) to connect with their families, legal counsel, and healthcare providers through video calls and online messaging.



AFICS-PHL signed the deed of donation forwarding tablets to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology E-Dalaw Project.

The service is an alternative to face-to-face visits, especially for families living far from correctional facilities or during times of physical visit restrictions, such as public health emergencies.

The donation will directly benefit 354 women PDLs housed in the female dormitories of Marikina, Mandaluyong, and Muntinlupa City Jails.

“This partnership reflects our shared commitment to human dignity and the right to maintain family and legal connections, even while incarcerated,” said Thetis Mangahas, President of AFICS-PHL.

At the signing ceremony, BJMP was led by NCR Regional Director Baby Noel Montalvo with Wena Fe Dalagan and Mary Ann B. Galapate representing the Marikina City Jail Female Dorms; Girlie A. Haber of the Mandaluyong City Jail Female Dorms; Victoria C. Brillantes from the Muntinlupa City Jail Female Dorms; and the Chief of Legal Service Gloria F. Manzano. AFICS-PHL was led by President Thetis Mangahas, Vice President for Finance and Fund Development Jana Ricasio, and Co-Chair of the Outreach Committee Teresita Marie Bagasao in the signing ceremony.



AFICS-PHL supports the E-Dalaw Project to help women deprived of liberty have increased online access to their families and legal counsel.

Regional Director Montalvo expressed gratitude for the support and emphasized the importance of digital tools in maintaining the well-being of PDLs, especially during times when physical visitation is restricted.

As part of the BJMP-AFICS agreement, BJMP will ensure the efficient use of the tablets by providing adequate internet access for E-DALAW services. It will also provide summary reports on the tablets’ usage indicating the number of inmates serviced and number of minutes (or hours) usage categorized by purpose of family visitation, legal consultation, medical/health consultation, and others. AFICS-PHL is also invited to visit the BJMP facilities to gather first-hand information from beneficiary PDLs and key informants on the benefits of E-DALAW program. These follow-up visits will form part of future activities of AFICS-PHL.



BJMP and AFICS-PHL marked the turnover with a group photo.

Meeting with UN Resident Coordinator Strengthens Partnership

by Anna Senga & Thetis Mangahas

Officers of AFICS-PHL have met twice with Mr. Arnaud Peral, the new United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in the Philippines, to introduce the association and discuss planned activities for the United Nations' 80th Anniversary.

The first meeting, held at the UNRC's Mandaluyong office in August 2025, served as a welcome call. AFICS-PHL briefed him on the association's work with former UN staff and its outreach activities. Mr. Peral expressed enthusiasm for AFICS-PHL' plans to mark the UN@80 milestone. He noted that the Philippines is an original signatory to the UN Charter.

During this initial meeting, AFICS-PHL outlined two flagship events for October — the Grand Reunion on 17 October 2025 and the Policy Forum on Multilateralism. Mr. Peral immediately confirmed his participation and commended AFICS-PHL for bringing together former UN personnel to reflect on the UN's legacy and its future. He also noted that, despite current funding challenges, this was an opportune time to highlight and celebrate the UN's long-standing partnerships with Philippine government agencies and civil society in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Appointed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Peral leads the UN's efforts to strengthen cooperation with the Philippines in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Since assuming his post on 1 February 2025, he has met with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to reaffirm the UN's support for the country's social and economic development agenda.

An AFICS-PHL follow-up meeting on 4 September 2025 updated Mr. Peral on the progress of UN@80's anniversary preparations and explored next steps for cooperation.

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MEETINGS. TOP PHOTO: *This was the first meeting with the UNRC. Introducing AFICS-PHL to UNRC Arnaud Peral.* BOTTOM PHOTO: *The second meeting discussed details on the various AFICS-PHL-planned events for UN@80.*

THE REQUISITE PHOTO OP. TOP PHOTO: *First meeting. Left to right: Anna Senga, Mi-Ann Maglipon, UNRC Arnaud Peral, Thetis Mangahas, and Linda Milan.* BOTTOM PHOTO: *Ces Adorna, Jana Ricascio, Arnaud Peral, Thetis Mangahas, and Mi Ann Maglipon*

Membership Committee Sparks Numerous Initiatives

by Anna Senga

When met with the challenge of increasing the AFICS-PHL membership and improving engagement of members, the AFICS-PHL Membership Committee did not waver.

The idea of holding a Grand Reunion of UN Retirees, Associates, and Friends to coincide with celebrating the 80th anniversary of the UN originated from the AFICS-PHL Membership Committee.

The Committee, led by its Chair Anna Senga, saw the Grand Reunion as an opportunity to involve more AFICS-PHL members and expand membership.

What did the Committee do?

All AFICS-PHL members were requested to update their profile. From only 21 percent in February 2025, the number of members who responded and updated their profiles increased to 60 percent by September 2025. This improved communication with members which led to their intensified engagement.

In addition, the Committee was able to identify members to volunteer as Agency Focal Points. The Focal Points from ILO, IOM, UNDP-UNVs-UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the UN Police were able to gather colleagues in mini-reunions and chat groups. Initially, the Focal Points focused their effort in making their colleagues aware and excited to participate to the October 17, 2025 Grand Reunion.

The Membership Committee also initiated a compilation of experiences of Filipinos who have worked with the UN. AFICS-PHL members were requested to submit a short write-up reflecting on significant UN experiences or impact of their work in the UN. In collaboration with the AFICS-PHL Communications Committee, particularly its Chair, Delia Barcelona, the Eighty@80 commemorative book is currently being readied for distribution. Those interested in getting a copy of the book can contact Anna Senga at annasenga@gmail.com.

Based on the suggestion received during the 2025 AFICS-PHL General Assembly, the Membership Committee also started preparing for the issuance of an AFICS-PHL ID card. The ID's design and content were discussed and agreed to by the Officers.

Due to budgetary constraints, the release of the AFICS-PHL ID cards is postponed to 2026.

And finally, the Membership Committee is pleased to report that from February until September 2025, AFICS-PHL has recruited fourteen (14) new members, namely:

1. Merceditas Brillantes (UNHCR)
2. Stephanie Aquino (UNHCR)
3. Ethel Capuno (UNCDF/UNDP)
4. Melinda Poot (UNFPA)
5. Diosdado Gallardo (UNDSS)
6. Dorina Bustos (WHO)
7. Indai Sajor (UN Office in Syria)
8. Teodi Wi (WHO)
9. June Alma Valisno (UNAP)
10. Jacqueline Kitong (UNFPA)
11. Roy Dimayuga (UNFPA)
12. Desiree Raquel Narvaez (UNICEF)
13. Felicitas Nebril (UNHCR)
14. Linda Hornilla (UNDP)

New members, welcome to AFICS-PHL!

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Update on number of AFICS-PHL members:

As of 8 September 2025, the following is the summary of membership:

REGULAR MEMBERS
Lifetime – 135
Annual – 29

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Lifetime – 20
Annual – 83

Above 85 years old and above – 6
Missing information – 10

Total: 283

Those interested to join AFICS-PHL can reach Anna Senga, Chairperson of the Membership Committee through ***annasenga@gmail.com*** or ***philippinesafics@gmail.com***

AFICS PHILIPPINES

Join Us in Support of the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations

Building Our Future Together

AFICS PHILIPPINES

VISION

Inspired by the values and principles of the United Nations and enriched by members' experiences in the service of the UN, AFICS-PHL is an association committed to promoting the well-being of former UN civil servants and fostering their social engagement.

MISSION

1. AFICS shall be the platform of former UN staff to continue to be active contributors to the purposes and principles of the UN;
2. AFICS shall serve as the voice of former UN staff by providing members a venue to express and exchange matters of importance;
3. AFICS shall mobilize and expand active membership and sustainable funding resources;
4. AFICS shall be a center and hub of information, knowledge, and support on pension, health and other benefits and opportunities for members; and
5. AFICS shall provide channels to foster camaraderie and care for its members.

AFICS PHILIPPINES COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP — To increase membership, expand members' engagement, and keep membership database up-to-date

PENSION & BENEFITS — To provide assistance to UN retirees with respect to the receipt or non-receipt of their UN pension and benefits

HEALTH — To promote and enhance the health and well-being of members

OUTREACH — To support underserved groups like abandoned elderly and women deprived of liberty in partnership with foundations and NGOs

SENIOR AFFAIRS — To keep memebers aware, knowledgeable, and able to maximize national and local benefits of retirees

COMMUNICATION — To lead and oversee the development of AFICS-PHL communication efforts and products

FINANCE & FUND DEV'T — To establish protocols for fund raising and documented system for financial management



AFICS-PHL Celebrates and Charts New Directions at 2025 General Assembly

by Mi Ann Maglipon

AFICS-PHL gathered its members on 26 January 2025 at the Social Weather Stations Auditorium in Quezon City for its Annual General Assembly — a hybrid event with about 35 members onsite and 15 more online.

Moderated by Reggie Molera, the meeting combined reflection on the past year's milestones with concrete plans for the future.

President Thetis opened the meeting with her report which highlighted achievements in three key areas: strengthening the association's institutional core, diversifying and adapting its services, and reinforcing partnerships.

Under Strengthening Our Institutional Core, she reported the completion of the Rules of Procedure for approval, the work of the Financial Management



Members broke into discussion groups to tackle suggestions on moving forward with both 2025 and 2026 AFICS-PHL activities



Adriana, Marlene, and Maria — all very active members of AFICS-PHL since its inception — were present during the meeting.

System and Procedures Task Force, and the first strategic planning exercise guided by a Ces Adorna, past AFICS-PHL President and current AFICS-PHL Adviser. She noted that membership continues to grow, reaching 283 with 135 lifetime members boosted by the "UNJSPF-letter" effect. Financial sustainability also improved, with year-end cash balances increasing to PHP 590,733 in 2024 — a 45 percent rise from the previous year.

Highlighting Diversifying and Adapting Our Services, President Thetis noted expanded efforts with the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund, continued improvements to the AFICS-PHL Retirement Handbook, and direct engagement with the UN Federal Credit Union. Communications have also flourished, with professional newsletters released twice yearly and Telekwentuhan (TK) sessions on cyber safety and healthy living drawing good participation. Outreach included plans to forge an agreement with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) to support women deprived of liberty through the E-Dalaw Program.

In Reinforcing Partnerships, she emphasized stronger ties with the UN Resident Coordinator and Team, the successful second UN Anniversary Event, and high-profile representation in the Federation of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), with AFICS-PHL members holding leadership roles.

The Assembly also heard from Jana Ricasio on the association's successful fundraising tour to Central Japan in October 2024, with 29 participants, and travel plans for 2025 to Bicol, Morocco, and Thailand.

FAFICS President Jerry Barton sent a video highlighting the unique nature of 2025 being the year for the 80th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of FAFICS. He saluted AFICS-PHL's active role in connecting and advising UN retirees on pension and health issues. He also said that FAFICS benefit from the leadership of AFICS-PHL members who have taken the role of Secretary, alternative representative to the UNJSPF board, and expert in the communication committee.

The body unanimously approved AFICS-PHL's proposed Financial Management System and Procedures (FMSP) presented by Jana Ricasio. The FMSP codifies financial planning, management, and reporting. Anna Senga reported new members as of 31 December 2024 and outlined plans for a grand homecoming on 17 October 2025 as part of the 80th anniversary of the UN, along with year-long activities and agency-based mini-reunions.

The Assembly concluded with games and a raffle that sent every participant home with a gift — a lighthearted ending to a day of serious planning.







TOP LEFT: President Thetis Manghas presented three major areas of AFICS-PHL's achievements. TOP RIGHT: The General Assembly meeting was ably facilitated by Reggie Molera. BOTTOM PHOTO: Participants actively joined the games prepared for the socials.

ALERT!

2026 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday
January 21, 2026
10 AM - 2 PM. Hybrid

Agenda:

Elections 2026
President's Report
Treasurer's Report
Committee Updates

AFICS-PHL Member Resources: Guidebooks and Literature

by Delia Barcelona

UN Retirement Handbook
(5th and latest version, 2022)

This handbook has been almost single-handedly and meticulously put together by Marlene Arduo, AFICS-PHL's own pension expert. It is now available on its 5th revised edition. It offers information on pension entitlements, certifications, after service health insurance (ASHI) coverage, after service life insurance (ASLI), non-tax liability in the Philippines, what to do when a retiree returns to work, what to do when a retiree passes away, and lots of references to relevant UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) documents and forms a retiree should know about. A copy of the handbook in digital or printed version is available at cost from the Association.



Rules of Procedures, adopted in 2023

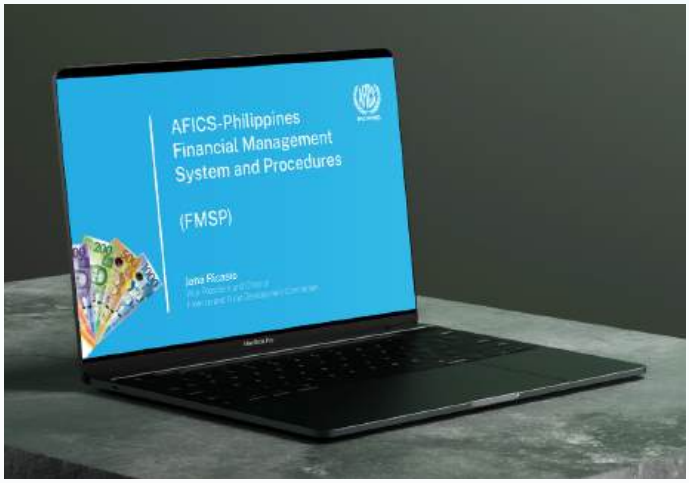
AFICS-PHL Rules of Procedures (RoP), adopted in 2023, provides guidance by which the association operates. In developing the RoP, the original Statues and By-Laws were reviewed by the committee headed by Ruth Batten with members Thetis Mangahas, Tony Fernandez, and Delia Barcelona. The RoP is aligned with the recently developed Rules of Procedure of the Federation of Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS).

The current AFICS-PHL RoP now has clearer provisions regarding the organizational structure, membership, the holding of its General Assembly, the terms and composition of its Executive Committee, membership dues and finance procedures, and provisions related to the process of making any amendments to the rules. The RoP was finalized and packaged into a booklet form in December 2022 and presented to the Annual General Assembly in January of 2023.



Financial Management System and Procedures (FMSP), adopted in 2025

As AFICS-PHL membership has grown alongside its activities, the Association felt it necessary to develop a robust and sustainable financial management system and procedures to underpin its operations. The work started in 2024, led by Jana Ricasio and members of the committee Ron Magnaye, Ruth Batten, Marites Sese, and ex-officio Tony Fernandez, AFICS-PHL Treasurer. The final output was presented for endorsement to the AFICS-PHL Annual General Assembly in January of 2025. The FMSP provides clarity in the management of the financial affairs of the Association, at the same time ensuring good internal controls, transparency and accountability through regular reporting mechanisms. The document includes sections on work planning and budgeting, management of receipts, establishment of depository accounts and records, handling of contributions from members, fundraising, management of expenses, funds allocation and utilization, financial records, and audit requirements.





FAFICS Concludes its 55th Council Session and FAFICS@50 Event

by Delia Barcelona

The Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) convened its 55th Council Session from 14 to 18 July 2025 at the Vienna International Centre, Austria. The week-long meeting concluded with the special FAFICS@50 anniversary celebration, marking five decades of service and solidarity among former international civil servants worldwide.

The Philippine delegation, consisting of AFICS-PHL President Thetis Mangahas, Executive Committee Officer Reggie Molera, FAFICS Honorary Assistant Secretary Lydia Ontal, and FAFICS Secretary Delia Barcelona, attended the event in person. Those who attended the session remotely were Mi Ann Maglipon, Jana Ricasio, and Lois Villanueva,

FAFICS President Jerry Barton emphasized that the July 2025 session was not only a celebration but also "a moment to recommit—to the values of international public service that first brought us to the UN system, to supporting each other not only in retirement but in sharing expertise and continuing to grow, and to ensuring that FAFICS remains a source of inspiration for all who dedicated their lives to building a better world—quietly, faithfully, and without applause or pay."

He concluded with a call to action: "Retirement is not the end of service—it is its continuation in a different form. We are not former international civil servants—we are enduring ones. And this Federation is not a relic of the past—it is a promise to the future. Let us toast—to the builders, the believers, and the battlers. To those who came before us, and to those who will carry the torch forward."

In his video message, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon echoed these sentiments. He highlighted the wealth of experience and talent among retirees, noting that they can still make a powerful contribution to a just, peaceful, and sustainable future. "Retirement does not mark the end of service," he said. "It opens new opportunities to share wisdom, mentor future generations, and remain engaged in shaping a better world."

He noted the International Day of Older Persons which signals the importance of embracing healthy and fulfilling lives as we age. Mr. Ban Ki-moon encouraged everyone to continue using their incredible talents to make a positive difference, whether in their local communities or on the global stage.

He thanked FAFICS for its dedication to representing and supporting former international civil servants over the past five decades. He asked them to continue their advocacy, and wished everyone good health, happiness, and continued purpose, and to remain united in "our shared commitment to a just, peaceful, and sustainable future."

Continued on next page



Members of AFICS-PHL who attended the 55th Council Session in Vienna were (left to right) Lydia Ontal, Reggie Molera, Delia Barcelona, and, Thetis Mangahas

FAFICS' Plenary Session focused on the four pillars of FAFICS: Pension, After-Service Health Insurance and Long Term Care (ASHIL), Communication, and Membership with members of the Philippine delegation actively contributing to the discussion. AFICS-PHL's President Thetis Mangahas was nominated as one of the 8 members to the working group on Succession Planning.

AFICS-PHL's paper on *Gaps in Addressing Health Needs in the UN Health Insurance Policies and Services* was taken up by the Standing Committee on ASHIL. FAFICS also acknowledged the substantive contribution of Lois Villanueva in developing the FAFICS website in English, French and Spanish. The website now has the summary of the Council Session and the full English report on the FAFICS@50 event.

A special E-publication on FAFICS history and achievements was launched during the Council opening. Additionally, a video on FAFICS in action across the world was also produced for the event.

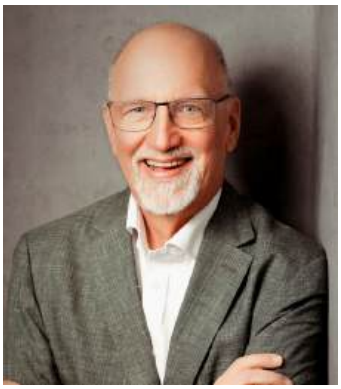
Over 100 participants from FAFICS Member Associations attended the hybrid event – some in person, and others remotely. Special guests included officials from the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSP), the Pension Board, United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU), Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA), and the UN Office in Vienna.

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Update on Health Insurance: Discussion during the FAFICS 55th Council Session, 14-17 July, 2025, Vienna

- The FAFICS ASHIL Committee recognizes that several UN staff are now leaving without after-service health insurance. It will discuss options to address this issue.
- To help guide and assist members, Member-Associations are encouraged to map the different health insurance policies existing in their respective countries.
- Member-Associations of FAFICS are also encouraged to go through the UN Joint Inspection Unit Report on Health Insurance, 2023/9. It has extensive information on the various plans of the UN system.
- AFICS-PHL's issue on medical ethics and the discretionary roles of Cigna's administrative and medical consultants in deciding pre-approval and approval requirements for hospitalization and prescriptions was well appreciated.
- The Committee noted that while health insurance rules are established by the different UN organizations and not by Cigna, the appeals processes within Cigna and organizations are not always transparent.
- Optimal dental and optical care, particularly for retirees as they age, are important and a systematic process for discussing these with the different UN organizations must be addressed.
- There will likely be an increase in the MIP premium if benefits are expanded. Retirees would apparently not be opposed to an increase in premiums in return for better benefits.
- In the case of the death of the retiree, survivors can consult guidelines prepared by Member-Associations. AFICS-PHL has its retirement handbook that addresses this.

Excerpts from the Message of FAFICS President Jerry Barton



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Eighty years ago, in the aftermath of the devastation of World War II, the United Nations was born out of hope for peace, cooperation, and a future in which nations would choose dialogue over conflict. The world has changed profoundly since 1945. Yet the founding ideals of the United Nations remain as vital today as they were then, despite and perhaps because of signs around the world of division, intolerance, inequality, and autocracies.

The year 2025 is a milestone year for those who have served the United Nations and have retired. The ECOSOC-accredited Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), established in 1975, with representation seats in the Pension Board, is celebrating its 50th year in 2025. The Federation represents the interests of more than 22,000 UN system retirees and beneficiaries around the world.

I particularly acknowledge the members of the Association of Former International Civil Servants in the Philippines (AFICS-PHL), who over the years have provided outstanding leadership and expertise in support of our common goals. Your active engagement as part of our Federation has helped keep the values and priorities of the United Nations system vibrant within our community and beyond.

Even in retirement, we remain part of the United Nations family — a community still committed to the principles we served.

Let us continue to support one another, advocate for the Organization's mission, and help ensure the goals of the United Nations remain alive and relevant for future generations.

With deep appreciation and warm regards,

Sincerely,



Jerry Barton
FAFICS President

FAFICS

The Federation of Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) was established in 1975. It is an accredited association of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which is the UN's largest body serving as a central platform for policy discussions and recommendations on sustainable development.

FAFICS also has representation seats in the Pension Board of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund. The Board is the policy-making body on retirement, death, and disability benefits. The Board reports to the General Assembly.

FAFICS now has 65 Member Associations covering the interests of more than 22,000 UN system retirees and beneficiaries around the world, particularly on issues related to pensions and after-service health insurance, including long-term care.



AFICS-PHL Fundraising Committee Offers Members Unforgettable Travel and Cultural Experiences

by Lois Villanueva and Jana Ricasio

The AFICS-PHL Fundraising Committee continues its mission to raise funds for its programmes, while also providing members with unique travel experiences, camaraderie, and entertainment.

In 2024, AFICS-PHL launched its Travel and Tours program for fundraising, designed both to enrich our understanding of other cultures and to strengthen the bonds of our friendships.

Our first tour was in Central Japan (Nagoya Prefecture) from October 27 to November 2, 2024, in time to enjoy the wonderful colors of autumn foliage of Japan. This trip brought us to places not frequented by large tourist crowds and included visits to old towns, alpine mountains, folk villages with the traditional grass-thatched roof houses, traditional tea houses, beautiful Japanese gardens, natural ponds, ancient temples, a Ninja home museum, and the Nagoya Castle. Twenty-nine members, friends, and families enjoyed the tour.

The 2025 Travels

This year's first tour brought members to the exotic landscapes and vibrant culture of Morocco. Held from May 14-24, the Morocco trip gathered around 20 members and friends who explored 12 of the country's most iconic destinations.

The 11-day tour of Morocco brought us to Rabat, Chefchaouen (the Blue City), Meknes, Fes, Ifrane, Erhoud, Merzouga, Tinghir, Quarzazate, Marrakech, Essaouira,and Casablanca. We were brought to see ancient mosques, memorials, palaces, and madrasa; fortress cities (casbahs); traditional markets (souks) with all sorts of exotic spices, produce, and colorful and intricate handicrafts; traditional workshops (of potteries, metalworks, argan and rose oils); a dessert trip with camel ride and tents for accommodations; amazing gorges and views of the Atlas mountains; and the wondrous botanical Majorelle garden, former residence of Yves St. Laurent.



AFICS-PHL travelers pose in front of Hassan II Mosque, a symbol of Moroccan heritage and craftsmanship, in Casablanca, Morocco.



Photo taken in the famous Chefchaouen, also called the "Blue City" of Morocco.

The trip to Morocco was nothing short of enchanting — a rich tapestry of ancient history, vibrant culture, stunning architecture, and dramatic landscapes. From the winding alleys of medinas to the golden dunes of the Sahara, every destination offered a sensory feast and unforgettable experiences.



Next Adventure is Northern Thailand: November 4 - 11, 2025

The next great adventure is heading to Northern Thailand's Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai from November 4–11, 2025. This trip is timed to coincide with the enchanting Loy Krathong Festival, offering participants a chance to witness thousands of lanterns illuminating the night sky and beautifully decorated floats drifting along the waterways.

In Chiang Mai, travelers will explore ancient temples like Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, ascend Doi Inthanon (Thailand's highest mountain) and its stunning King and Queen Pagodas, browse vibrant night markets and the Hmong flea market, and savor the local flavors of a traditional Lanna Kantoke dinner.

Chiang Rai promises equally stunning sights, including the dazzling, one-of-a-kind White Temple (Wat Rong Khun), the serene Blue Temple (Wat Rong Suea Ten), the mysterious Black Temple, the beautiful Royal Villa and Gardens, and the historic Golden Triangle where three countries meet. The itinerary also includes a unique opportunity for cultural exchange with the Karen Long Neck hill tribe people.

2026 Travel Destinations

Looking ahead, exciting tours are already in the works for 2026.



BHUTAN - ***February 24 – March 3, 2026***
Members will journey to the mystical kingdom of Bhutan, often called the "Land of the Thunder Dragon." Known for its unspoiled Himalayan landscapes, colorful festivals, and deep-rooted Buddhist traditions, Bhutan offers treasures such as the cliffside Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang), the fortress-monasteries of Punakha Dzong and Trongsa Dzong, and breathtaking valleys dotted with prayer flags and terraced fields.



KYUSHU, JAPAN - ***April 1 – 8, 2026***
Kyushu, Japan, is a captivating island of volcanic landscapes, hot springs, and rich history. Travelers will soak in the therapeutic waters of Beppu and Yufuin, explore the samurai heritage of Kumamoto Castle, and marvel at Mount Aso, one of the world's largest active volcanoes. They will experience coastal Nagasaki and its spectacular seasonal blooms.



SPAIN AND PORTUGAL ***(2nd semester 2026)***
The committee is exploring possible arrangements for the flavors and colors of Spain and Portugal. The itinerary is being developed. Invitations to interested travellers will be announced before March 2026.

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Expanding our Health Span into Our 80s and Beyond: The SHIELD Formula

by Tess Stuart Guia

When the calendar edges toward another birthday, many of us start thinking not just about living longer, but living better, as Dr. P. Attia espoused in his 2025 book, ***Outlive: Live Better Longer***.

Healthy ageing isn't a distant dream; it's a practical plan you can carry out. The formula known as ***SHIELD*** — popularized by brain health expert Dr. R. Tanzi and embodied in Dan Beuttner's ***The Blue Zones*** — offer six interconnected practices designed to expand both our health span and life span to shield us from the four big age-related diseases: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer's. It's about maintaining vitality, clarity, balance, and purpose with dignity as we age.

Here is how to turn SHIELD into daily life:

***SLEEP*:** The science is clear: 7–9 hours of quality sleep does more than feeling refreshed during the day. Deep, restorative sleep helps the brain clear waste and may reduce amyloid buildup linked to Alzheimer's. Real life tip: keep a regular bedtime, create a dark, cool sanctuary for rest, and limit screens before bed. If sleep still eludes you, a brief daytime nap can be a friend. If you wake at 3 a.m., resist the urge to scroll; try a calm breathing routine to ease back to sleep.

HANDLE STRESS: A steady brain thrives on calm. Chronic stress gnaws at mood and memory over time. The antidote is a toolkit of mindfulness, meditation, and slow, deep breathing. Build short rituals that honor rest and recovery. Tiny practices add up: a 5–10 minute mindfulness session each morning or evening can anchor a more peaceful day.

***INTERACT WITH OTHERS*:** Staying socially active and sustaining relationships pays off in mental and emotional health. Social engagement also combats loneliness, a known cognitive risk. Make time for family and friends, volunteer in your community, join clubs or faith groups, and consider mentoring younger generations. Practical nudge: schedule regular social activities and set a small, achievable "paying forward" goal each month.

***EXERCISE*:** Create a varied routine you'll enjoy. Regular movement supports heart health, balance, mobility, and brain health. Mix it up: walking, cycling, dancing, light strength work, balance drills, and flexible stretches. Break up long periods of sitting. Realistic goal: aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity each week that you genuinely enjoy.

***LEARN NEW THINGS*:** Keep curiosity alive. Reading, picking up a hobby or language, learning a musical instrument, solving puzzles, or taking online courses all strengthen brain networks and resilience. Start small: try a new hobby for 15–30 minutes a day or commit to one new skill per quarter.

DIET*:** A Mediterranean-style, high-fiber diet supports gut health, energy, and wellbeing. Build meals around plant-based proteins, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, beans, healthy fats, and lean proteins from fish and chicken. Practice the 80% rule—eat until you're 80% full. Limit sweets, sugary drinks, highly processed foods, smoking, and excessive alcohol. Hydration matters: aim for 6–8 glasses of water daily. Stick to meals with a ***colorful plate: half vegetables and fruits, one-quarter whole grains, one-quarter plant-based and lean protein. Select foods that nurture brain health, and prevent heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

- Create a personal action plan for each pillar and weave it into your routine over the coming months.
- Schedule regular wellness checkups and annual screenings to catch issues early.
- Support health through good hygiene and limiting exposure to pollutants and toxins.

The essence of SHIELD comes down to consistency - sleep better, stress less, connect more, move every day, keep learning, and eat well. Taken together, these wellness pillars form a practical blueprint for longevity and vitality—one that honors who we are today and how we want to enjoy life in our 80s, 90s, and beyond.

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Finance and Fund Development Committee Innovations to Raise Funds

by Jana Ricasio

AFICS-PHL has increasingly generated funding contributions over the last five years in support of its activities, particularly its outreach, through collection of membership fees and various fundraising projects. It had become imperative to put in place the organization's financial management system and procedures.

In January 2025, at its General Assembly, the AFICS-PHL Financial Management System and Procedures (FMSP) developed by the Committee was adopted with a proviso for review after a trial period of one-year.

Income-generating projects

Travel and Tours

In 2023, the proposal for fundraising through organized tours was approved. The first tour, conducted on October 27–November 2, 2024, took place in Nagoya Prefecture in Central Japan with 29 participants. The Morocco Tour of May 14-24, 2025 was completed with 20 participants.

Travel to Northern Thailand is slated for November 4-11, 2025 with 17 enlisted participants. In 2026, a tour of Bhutan on February 24-March 3 is slated and travel to Kyushu, Japan is scheduled for April 1-8.

Realized income from the first Japan tour is P230,000, while the Morocco tour is USD 1,900. Potential income from pending tours is approximately USD 3,700. These figures do not include operating costs such as the proposed hiring of a part-time Travel Assistant.

UN Day celebration ticket sales, bazaar and auction

The 80th UN Anniversary event to be held on October 17, 2025 has an estimated expenditure of P265,000, while funds raised through ticket sales, UN souvenir merchandise, auction, photobooth, and best attire competition is estimated to generate an optimistic P263,000. This will incur a minimum net subsidy of P2,000, up to P73,000 depending on sales and funds generated.

[Note: Expenditure for the 80th UN Anniversary in USD equivalent is USD 4,690 @Php 56.5]

Review and update of Membership Dues

As of end-2024, membership dues constitute just 16% of total AFICS-PHL receipts. Given the low rate, particularly the P300 annual dues, a comprehensive review is being conducted to rationalize and update the fee structure. Recommendations are anticipated for presentation prior to the January 2026 General Assembly.

Potential fund raiser projects

Aside from its travel and tours program, AFICS-PHL may consider new initiatives for fundraising.

(i) Pooled investment

Members may be willing to put up a contribution to an investment trust fund for a total pool of P2.5 million for an investment placement of net 5.0% per annum (for 5 years). This would generate P125,000/annum. 25 members may each contribute P100,000. At the expected rate, each member would earn P5,000/annum. Members may wish to donate 100% of yield to AFICS-PHL or 50% (P2,500). At 50%, AFICS-PHL would have a net earning of P62,500/annum.

(ii) An evening of music (Retro and Broadway)

In lieu of fundraising merchandise sales (bazaar and auction, and attire competition), AFICS-PHL may sponsor and generate ticket sales for an evening of music with dinner at an established bistro or café that is already fitted for stage musicals or shows. The line-up of musicians need not be top names, but auditioned for music entertainment quality.

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