

Loren declares presidential bid

by MARICHU VILLANUEVA
Philstar.com



Sen. Loren Legarda meets with Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed during a visit in Male last July 13. Philstar.com Photo by Franz Dejon

MALE, Maldives—Speaking as a “champion” for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), Sen. Loren Legarda declared here last July 13 her presidential bid for 2010, which she hopes to use as a political platform for mobilizing the global community in mitigating the impact of climate change.

Legarda made the pronouncements at a formal dinner here with officials.

“I can only do this if I am the president of my country,” Legar-

da told her audience, which included a dozen Filipino workers employed at the Bاندos Resort Island, one of the 1,192 islands that comprise the Republic of Maldives.

“Politics is a necessary platform,” she said.

Legarda has consistently topped mock polls but has slipped in the latest surveys of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) and Pulse Asia.

She conceded it was due to her involvement with the UNISDR that required frequent foreign trips.

Legarda, who belongs to the Nationalist People’s Coalition (NPC), is set to sit down this week with deposed President Joseph Estrada to discuss their possible political alliance for next year’s elections.

Estrada has repeatedly called on opposition presidential wannabes to agree to a common can-

didate or he would be compelled to run again for president.

The senator is currently here on a mission for the UNISDR to organize a “Leaders’ Forum” for climate change for the 10 most vulnerable countries that includes the Philippines and Maldives.

The Maldives government is co-organizing the Leaders’ Forum on climate change dubbed as “V-10” or short for the 10 most vulnerable countries.

It is tentatively scheduled for September here with former US Vice President Al Gore and ex-UN secretary-general Kofi Annan among the invited speakers. Gore won the Nobel Peace Prize for his environment advocacy while Annan is currently engaged in the Global Humanitarian Forum waging an international campaign for “climate justice.”

In preparation for the scheduled V-10 Leaders’ Forum, Legarda met with top government officials here led by Maldives’ first democratically-elected President Mohamed Nasheed. ■

Comelec to issue voter’s ID after 2010 polls

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) will issue identification cards to over 25 million registered voters after the 2010 elections, a poll official said.

“Of the 48 million registered voters since the 2007 elections, 21.27 million IDs have been released while the rest will be given their IDs after the 2010 elections. Given that the voter’s ID is not a requirement to vote, the Comelec has stopped printing the IDs so it can focus in preparations for the 2010 polls,” Comelec spokesman James Jimenez told *Inquirer.net*.

Jimenez said the Comelec IT department (ITD), which handles the printing of IDs, was mandated to prioritize the preparations for the upcoming automated elections so voter’s ID printing will only resume after the 2010 elections.

According to Ferdinand De Leon, IT officer at Comelec’s ITD system operation division, 23 million of the 48 million registered voters in 2007 had biometrics records with Comelec. But of the number, he said 1.3 million are not yet printed due to lack of special paper for the ID and some voters have corrupted biometrics or wrong encoded data.

Another 25 million voters have not been given IDs because they have no biometrics records—or digital specimens of photo, signature, and thumb marks—which are needed for the printing of the IDs, added De Leon.

Biometrics can offer a more refined method for cleansing the computerized voter’s list (CVL) by locating multiple records of voter’s registration throughout the CVL biometrics matching, said De Leon. (*Inquirer.net*)

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