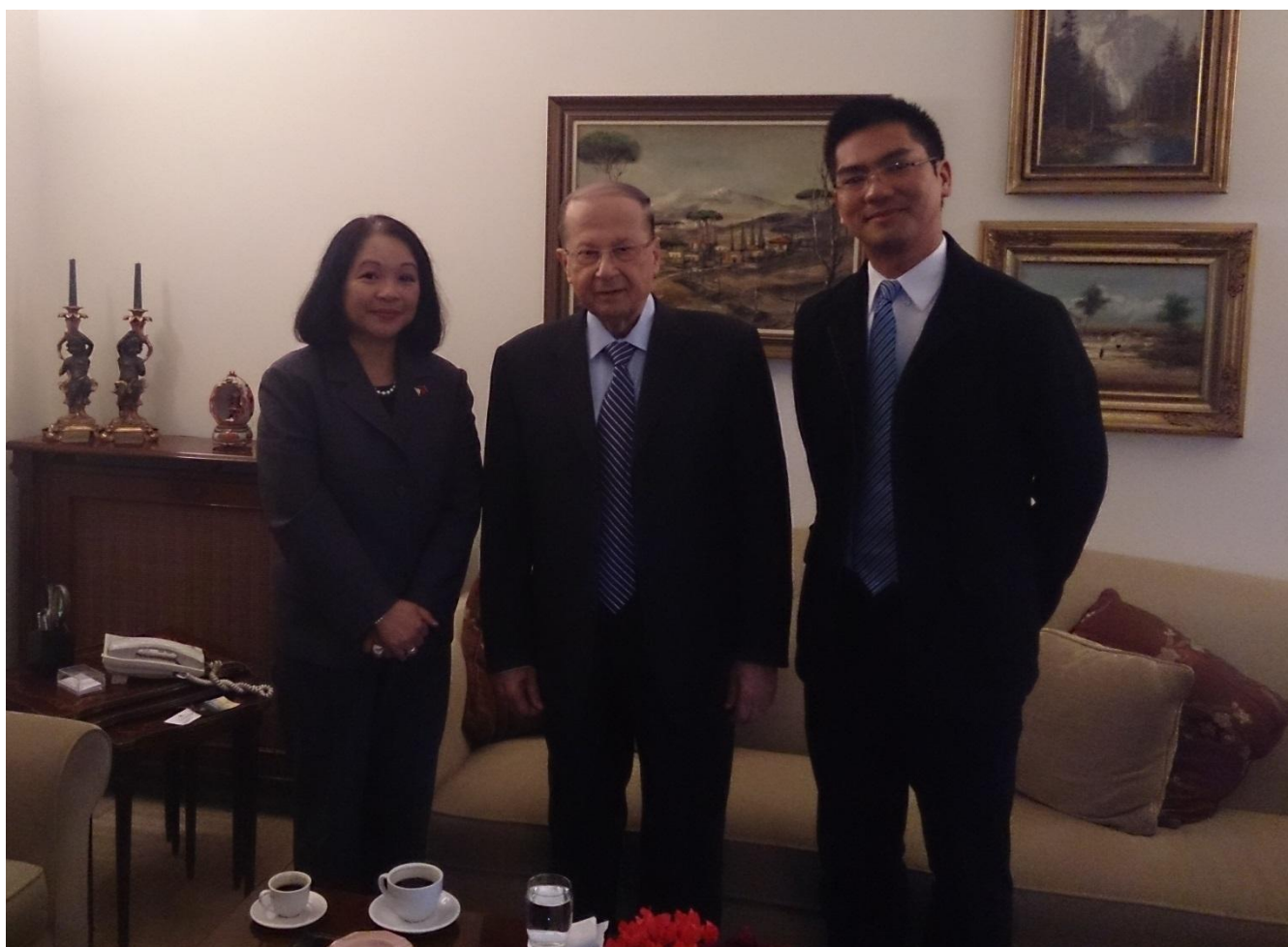


## PRESS RELEASE

### AMBASSADOR LEAH M. BASINANG-RUIZ CALLS ON MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND LEADER OF THE FREE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT GENERAL MICHEL AOUN



#### PHOTOS:

**FIRST ROW LEFT** – Ambassador Leah B. Ruiz (left) briefs Member of Parliament H.E. General Michel Aoun (center) as Mr. Michel De Chadarevian (right), General Aoun’s Foreign Affairs Adviser, listens; **FIRST ROW RIGHT** – Ambassador Ruiz presents to General Aoun a bottle of Paradise Mango Rum Liqueur as part of the Embassy’s trade promotion program; **SECOND ROW** – Ambassador Ruiz and Embassy Information Officer Edwin Batallones pose with General Aoun after the meeting.

18 December 2013 – On Friday, 13 December 2013, Ambassador Leah M. Basinang-Ruiz paid a courtesy call on H.E. General Michel Aoun, Member of Parliament and Leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, one of the major political parties in Lebanon.

General Aoun is a former commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces and an influential political figure in Lebanon. During the call, Ambassador Ruiz gave General Aoun a brief background of the long-standing Philippine-Lebanese relations, including the status of the Philippines-Lebanon Memorandum of Agreement on Labor Cooperation and the on-going negotiations on the Standard Employment Contract (SEC). She stressed that the Philippine side has ratified the MOU six months after it was signed on 1 February 2012, while the official notification of the ratification by the Lebanese side is still being awaited. The efforts of the Embassy to protect around 30,000 Filipinos in Lebanon and the

support and cooperation by the various concerned Lebanese government agencies were also highlighted during the meeting.

Ambassador Ruiz also apprised the General on the efforts of the Embassy to bring in to Lebanon Philippine various food products and expressed her hope that Lebanese businessmen would also consider the Philippines as one of their major trading hubs in Southeast Asia.

For his part, General Aoun assured Ambassador Ruiz of his support for the bilateral initiatives of the Philippine Embassy. Also present during the call was General Aoun's Foreign Affairs Adviser, Mr. Michel de Chadarevian.**END**