

**Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ...**

# **Spotlight on food security, disaster preparedness, world economy at ASEM**

**BEIJING, China, Oct. 27 (PinoyGlobal)** — Leaders from 45 Asian and European countries gathered here today to begin the two-day *Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)* that is expected to further enhance relations between the two continents on various issues of common concern, notably food security, disaster preparedness, the global economic debacle and sustainable development.

The summit meeting a few weeks removed from the joyous 2008 Beijing Olympics is in contrast to the gloom cast by the worldwide economic crisis.

The leaders were welcomed by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao at the North Hall of the Great Hall of the People here.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, dressed in a royal blue business suit, was the second leader received by the Chinese premier. She is one of three lady world leaders participating in the 7th ASEM, the two others being Finland President Tarja Halonen and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

During the official photo shoot of the ASEM leaders, the President stood 6th from right in the first row. During the plenary session at the Banquet Hall of the Great Hall of the People, the President was flanked by the South Korean president to her left and the Austrian president to her right. In his keynote address, Chinese President Hu Jintao called on his fellow world leaders to “enhance further policy coordination and make a common response” to the recent financial crisis. Finnish President Halonen, in her message as the host of the 6th ASEM in 2006, echoed Hu Jintao’s call for the Asian and European economies to cooperate and, together, face the challenge of the US economic meltdown. She also called for an “open mind” to address the global financial challenges and further enhance measures to address climate change issues. For his part, European Commission Head Juan Barroso called for “combined action” that “truly makes a difference” to address the



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food security problem.” “The world needs global solutions to global problems,” he stressed.

Founded in 1996, ASEM is a high-level and large scale inter-governmental forum between Asia and Europe. Over the past 12 years, it has created favorable conditions for the socio-economic development of the two regions through dialogues, understanding and cooperation. China, the seventh country to host the 12-year-old ASEM, has played a constructive role in promoting the consolidation and development of Asia-Europe partnership by participating in various activities with an active and pragmatic attitude. The ASEM is composed of the 27 members of the European Union (EU), Japan, South Korea, China, India, Pakistan, Mongolia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.#

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