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## Some 40 regional heads of multinational companies to attend ICT awards in Manila

**By Max V. de Leon**  
*Reporter*

UP TO 40 regional heads of big multinational companies are expected to witness the citation of the best business process outsourcing (BPO) companies in the country when the Canadian Chamber of Commerce holds the International ICT Awards—Manila 2007 on March 1 at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati.

Richard Mills, president of the International ICT Awards—Manila 2007, said the event presents a great opportunity for the local BPO sector to showcase to the world its best features that made it a dominant player in the ICT industry in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mills said 15 regional managers of global companies have already confirmed their attendance to the event and the number is expected to reach as high as 40 in the coming days.

“They will take a look at the BPO companies here and see how they are doing,” Mills told the BusinessMirror, which is the International ICT Awards—Manila 2007 media partner.

Even the major sponsors of the event, he said, are big international firms, namely, Five9, Nortel, BlackBerry, TPI and Colliers International. The PLDT Business Solutions is the local sponsor.

The ICT awards is being promoted internationally with the help of regional publications like MIS Asia, ComputerWorld and Telecom Asia. The organizers expect 300 to 400 guests in the event.

Mills said while the Philippines is already being regarded as equal or even better than India in the BPO field, there is a need for big events like this to continue promoting the domestic industry.

“Other countries are also competing with us so we have to make these companies come here first,” he said.

Mills said even if the Philippines is just entering its “fast-growth period,” the domestic BPO sector is already outperforming that of India, particularly if based on the employment generated.

He noted that India, with close to a billion people, only has about one million BPO personnel, whereas the Philippines, with a population of over 80 million, already has 200,000 industry employees.

Also, Mills said the annual average 50-percent growth in employment in the past few years in the local BPO is the best-ever in the world by a single industry, far better than the “dot.com” years in the US. “And these are real jobs and real money,” he said.

Even the number of inquiries that he is receiving from abroad on the country’s BPO sector has increased from an average of two per month last year to two inquiries per week these days.

Undoubtedly, Mills said the BPO sector is the biggest employer that gives the best pay in the country today.

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THE government is doing everything to provide a fair solution on the shelved plans to bid out the right to explore and to develop about 4,000 hectares on Mount Diwalwal, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri said Sunday.

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He said the country is now entering a critical stage which could be seen by people in the future as the time when the Philippines emerges as one of the tigers of Asia.

The BPO sector, he said, will be playing a major role here, along with electronics and mining.

Awards to be given away are the BPO Company of the Year, Best New BPO Locator of the Year, Best Mid-Sized BPO Company of the Year, BPO Employer of the Year, Fastest Growing BPO Company of the Year, Most Innovative BPO Company of the Year and the ICT Individual Contributor of the Year Award each for the public and private sectors.

Five finalists will be chosen in each category and the winner will be announced in the awards gala night.

The judges are Belen Bonifacio, managing director of the Cebu Educational Development Foundation for Information Technology (CEDF-IT); Celeste Ilagan, Board of Investments–Department of Trade and Industry executive director; Mitch Locsin, executive director of the Business Process Association of the Philippines (BPAP); Don Felbaum, head of the ICT Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines; Henry Schumacher, executive director of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines; Sean Georget, executive director of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, and Mills.

Keynoting the event are Jim Dvorkin, CTO of Five9 and one of Silicon Valley USA's foremost technology gurus, and Manuel V. Pangilinan, chairman of the board of PLDT.

Mills said nominations for the event will close next week.

#### **South**

ZAMBOANGA CITY—An official of a German-registry cruise ship that dropped anchor on Friday here said tourists like him are not worried over reports of terrorists' activities taking place in the southern Philippines.

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