RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE NEW NORMAL TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE MASSIVE FLOODING CAUSED BY TYPHOOM ULYSSES, IN RELATION TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF AND COMPLIANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION, AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT LAWS BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN LIGHT OF THE ESCALATING CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTER RISKS, COMPOUNDED BY FACTORS CAUSED BY THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE (COVID)-19 PANDEMIC, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING STRONGER POLICY MEASURES THAT WILL HELP AVERT FUTURE LOSS AND DAMAGE AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 16 of the Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall "protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature;"

WHEREAS, in pursu of the Constitutional provision, various laws on environmental and climate action, such as the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System, Marine Pollution Control law, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Renewable Energy Act, Environmental Awareness and Education Act, Climate Change Act and its amendatory law creating the People’s Survival Fund, Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act, Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act, Green Jobs Act, Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act, have been passed, the effective implementation of which is vital to the country’s sustainable growth and development;

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 9729 or the Climate Change Act, as amended, declares that the State shall "adopt the principle of protecting the climate system for the benefit of humankind, on the basis of climate justice," in view of the country’s vulnerability to the "dangerous consequences of climate change such as rising seas, changing landscapes, increasing frequency and/or severity of droughts,
fires, floods and storms, climate-related illnesses and diseases, damage to ecosystems, biodiversity loss that affect the country’s environment, culture, and economy”;

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act declares the State policy to “uphold the people’s constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country’s institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management and building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts”;

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10121 further provides that the State shall “adopt a disaster risk reduction and management approach that is holistic, comprehensive, integrated, and proactive in lessening the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of disasters including climate change, and promote the involvement and participation of all sectors and all stakeholders concerned, at all levels, especially the local community”;

WHEREAS, Section 26 of Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code emphasizes the significant role played by local government units (LGUs) in the maintenance of ecological balance in their respective communities by requiring national agencies and government-owned and controlled corporations to ensure sufficient consultations have been undertaken and appropriate clearances have been secured in relation to the planning and implementation of any project or program that may cause pollution, climatic change, depletion of non-renewable resources, loss of crop land, rangeland, or forest cover, and extinction of animal or plant species;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 11465, or the 2020 General Appropriations Act, mandates all agencies of the government “to plan and implement programs and projects, taking into consideration measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction, based on climate and disaster risk assessments”;

WHEREAS, the latest scientific consensus on climate change, embodied in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), among them the 2019 Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, revealed that over the 21st century, the ocean is projected to transition to unprecedented conditions with increased temperatures, further acidification, and altered production. Marine heatwaves and extreme El Niño and La Niña events are projected to become more frequent;

WHEREAS, the report found that sea level continues to rise at an increasing rate. Extreme sea levels and coastal hazards will be exacerbated by projected increases in tropical cyclone intensity and precipitation;

WHEREAS, the 2017 Philippine Climate Change Assessment (PhilCCA) Report revealed that based on vulnerability studies, the most vulnerable regions to tropical cyclones in the country are the National Capital Region (NCR), Southern Tagalog, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, the Cordillera Administrative Region, and Bicol Province. The same study suggests that Visayas and Mindanao are likewise becoming
more at risk due to an increasing number of tropical cyclones entering the southern part of the country;

WHEREAS, the PhilCCA report also mentioned that cities and municipalities along the banks and flood plains of the Pasig-Marikina River basin (namely Manila, Mandaluyong, and Marikina) and CAMANAVA areas (namely Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) are likely to be at high risk from flooding due to extreme events in 2050. For a 1-in-100-year flood in 2050 under certain infrastructure scenarios, more than 2.5 million people will be affected in such high population density areas as Manila, Quezon City, Pasig City, Marikina City, San Juan, and Mandaluyong City. More roads (around 158.9 km) will likely be flooded by inundation depths of 8 to 50 cm;

WHEREAS, the massive loss and damage of the Philippines in October to November this year from back-to-back typhoons and weather disturbances (tropical depression Ofel, typhoon Pepito, typhoon Quinta, super typhoon Rolly, tropical storm Siony, tropical storm Tonyo, and typhoon Ulysses), and from other extreme weather events that wreaked havoc in the country in recent years shows that climate change is a clear and present threat to the country’s poverty reduction and other sustainable development goals;

WHEREAS, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Typhoon Ulysses brought an average of 234 mm of rainfall in the Marikina-Pasig River system within 11 hours, about 63% more than the average rainfall for the month. This is reminiscent of Typhoons Ondoy (2009), Pablo (2012), and Yolanda (2013), among other destructive typhoons that hit the country in the past decade;

WHEREAS, Typhoon Ulysses made three (3) landfalls in Quezon province during its traverse over the country, first in Patnanungan, second in Burdeos, and third in General Nakar towns, and caused the hoisting of tropical cyclone warning signals (TCWS) throughout 9 to 13 November 2020 in Luzon, including in Catanduanes, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Romblon, Masbate including Ticao and Burias Islands, Quezon, Northern Samar, Samar, Eastern Samar, moving northwestern to Isabel, Kalinga, Abra, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, Mt. Province, Ifugao, Benguet, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal, Laguna, Batangas, Quezon including Polillo Islands, Oriental Mindoro, and Occidental Mindoro including Lubang Island, among others, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Update: “Sitrep No. 06 on Preparedness Measures and Effects for Typhoon Ulysses” published on 16 November 2020;

WHEREAS, the NDRRMC reported the affected population to be at least 523,871 families or 2,074,301 persons in 5,186 barangays in Regions I, II, III, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, V and NCR, with casualties of 67 dead, 21 injured, and 13 missing

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1 Based on the highest mean monthly rainfall for dry months (November to April) in the Marikina River Basin. (Source: https://riverbasin.dnr.gov.ph/masterplans/marikinaexecutivesummary.pdf)
persons; while damage to agriculture is now estimated at P2.137 Billion, and to infrastructure at P482.854 Million and rising;

WHEREAS, according to the latest report from the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) entitled, _Human Cost of Disasters: An overview of the last 20 years, 2000-2019_, floods have the highest impacts in Asia, as the continent experienced 41% of all flooding events and with a total of 1.5 billion people affected, accounted for 93% of people affected by floods worldwide;

WHEREAS, the UNDRR report also mentioned that many of these impacts are preventable since flooding, unlike most types of disasters, has affordable mechanisms of primary prevention, such as dams, dikes and drainage systems;

WHEREAS, various dam water release protocols dictate that once the water level in a certain dam reaches its threshold, the excess water should be discharged to ensure the integrity of the dam’s structure and avert catastrophe associated with dam failure, and such information shall be coordinated and communicated with concerned agencies and stakeholders, especially affected local government units (LGUs);

WHEREAS, the Magat Dam Protocol on Dam Discharge and Flood Warning Operation provides for proper coordination with PAGASA, warning steps, and drawdown of the water level two to three days before the expected landfall of a typhoon, which must be communicated with agencies concerned such as the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Philippine National Police (PNP), LGUs, media, and NGOs;

WHEREAS, massive flooding in towns proximate to the Magat, Angat, Ambuklao, Binga, and Ipo dams raises the question of whether proper enforcement of dam water release protocols was implemented by dam operators, including the decision to release dam water during the impact of a typhoon on 12 November 2020, and their extent of coordination between with PAGASA and OCD on the forecast of rainfalls and the forewarning and preparedness of local communities days ahead of the landfall of Typhoon Ulysses must be examined thoroughly;

WHEREAS, the National Irrigation Authority-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System began to release water from the reservoir on 9 November 2020, opening all seven (7) gates on 12 November, which contributed to the massive flooding in Cagayan and Isabela;

WHEREAS, the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team’s assessment in the aftermath of Typhoon Ondoy in 2009 cited poor drainage systems and garbage disposal problems as having aggravated the impact of the typhoon;

WHEREAS, the regular declogging of canals, roadside ditches, and drains must be observed by the Department of Public Works and Highways and LGUs, in the same manner that the construction of roads must check recessed or deepened areas that cause incessant floods;

WHEREAS, traditional flood mitigation projects such as river dredging, dike construction, and tree planting upstream may need to be supplemented by natural flood intervention programs such as river and floodplain restoration;
WHEREAS, landscape and ecosystem-based comprehensive development and land use planning informed by geohazard maps and climate and disaster risk assessments should be practiced by all national government agencies (NGAs) and LGUs;

WHEREAS, despite the enactment of landmark policies on the environment, and climate change and disaster risk reduction and management, there is still continued decline of the state of the environment, in terms of challenges arising from poor urban governance, vulnerable rural livelihoods, and ecosystems decline which drive disaster risks and poverty in the context of climate change and cause loss and suffering for millions of Filipinos;

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon Congress to determine the effective use of public funds in the implementation of the environmental, climate, and disaster risk reduction laws to promote the sustainability of natural systems and the security and welfare of the present and future generations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, in the exercise of its oversight functions, conduct an audit of relevant national government agencies and local government units in relation to their compliance to existing environmental, climate, disaster risk reduction and management and appropriation laws, in light of the escalating climate-related disaster risks, compounded by factors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the end in view of ensuring an enhanced national monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of these laws and warranting the accountability of government officials, private entities and other involved stakeholders;

RESOLVED, FURTHER, that the House of Representatives conduct a review on protocols followed by dam operators to ensure that measures for improved management of dams are adjusted to climate risk scenarios including pre-emptive safe discharge of water, and linked to effective early warning systems for communities at risk of floods, to prevent loss of lives and destruction of properties and livelihood in the event that massive water discharge are resorted to;

RESOLVED, FURTHERMORE, that the House of Representatives mandate PAGASA to determine areas for improvement of its capability and the agility of its systems for climate observation and projection, weather forecasting, and real-time climate information dissemination to dam operators, national government agencies, local government units, academe, and research institutions; and translate scientific climate information into more relatable messages of potential impacts for more effective risk communication;

RESOLVED, FURTHERMORE, that the House of Representatives mandate the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Mines and Geosciences Bureau, to ensure that geohazard maps are updated to take into account current and projected climate hazards and are well-understood by local government units, and provide basis to consider measures to "protect, retreat, accommodate" based on assessment of risk;
RESOLVED, FURTHERMORE, that the House of Representatives urge local government units to promptly mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in their development, investment, and land use planning;

RESOLVED, FURTHERMORE, that the House of Representatives mobilize government agencies and instrumentalities and local government units towards the effective implementation of environmental, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction and management laws, taking into consideration the existing health and safety protocols being implemented to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic;

RESOLVED FINALLY TO EXPRESS the sense of the House of Representatives, in pursuit of climate justice for the Philippines and vulnerable developing nations, that developed countries shall deliver on their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to keep temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and to provide support to developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change, avert unprecedented loss and damages, and achieve inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development.

Adopted

LOREN LEGARDA