

Committee Daily Bulletin

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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2017 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health (DOH) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the budget presentation on the proposed FY 2017 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Scott Davies Lanete (3rd District, Masbate) sat as the presiding officer during the briefing on the proposed budget of the DOH and its attached agencies, corporations and corporate hospitals.</p> <p>Health Secretary Paulyn Jean Rosell-Ubial said that under the 2017 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the DOH will get a total of P144 billion, an increase of 14% compared to its 2016 budget of P126 billion.</p> <p>Among the Department's accomplishments were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved some of the health-related millennium development goals (MDGs) which include the increase in the number of malaria-free provinces, people afflicted with HIV who received medical attention, and facility-based deliveries; and increase in the tuberculosis (TB) case detection rate and treatment success rate; Improved people's access to quality health facilities and services through the construction of 2,862 barangay health stations, 2,626 regional health units, 685 local government unit (LGU) hospitals, and 70 DOH hospitals; Deployed 11,799 health workers throughout the country from 2010 to the second quarter of 2016; Increased the population coverage of PhilHealth from 51% in 2010 to 92% in 2015; and Spent P45.4 million and P5.8 million for the medical expenses of indigent and senior citizens, respectively. <p>For 2017, Ubial said the DOH will continue to pursue the goal of protecting Filipinos, especially the poor, from the high cost of health care and providing the best possible health outcomes with no disparity.</p> <p>Rep. Harry Roque Jr. (Party-List, KABAYAN) asked the DOH to once and for all declare the real situation in the country with regard to the Zika virus disease, chiding the DOH for its inconsistent pronouncements on the matter.</p> <p>Ubial informed the Committee that there had been five verified cases of Zika virus in the Philippines in the previous years and the latest case was verified two days after she announced that the country is Zika-free. Ubial, however, assured the Committee that the country remains free from Zika-carrying mosquitoes, explaining that the Zika cases in the country involve people infected abroad.</p> <p>Sought to comment on the reduction of the MOOE budget of DOH-owned hospitals, Ubial explained that the budget cut was based on the hospitals' level of spending in FY 2015. She promised to convey</p>

Continuation...
Appropriations

the concerns of the legislators to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and to request an increase in the MOOE budget of the DOH-owned hospitals.

Several legislators also inquired on the current status of the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, which according to them, is one of the country's most affordable hospitals for maternity cases. Their question is related to the planned transfer of the hospital to a new location which is being opposed by some of its employees.

According to Ubial, a building is currently being constructed inside the DOH compound in Tayuman, Sta. Cruz, Manila which will become the new home of Fabella Hospital. With a budget of P400 million, the building's construction is set to be completed by May 2017.

Rep. Arnolfo Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) raised the perennial issue of patients in emergency cases being refused admission in hospitals for not being able to produce money for downpayment. He said hospitals should be compelled to post messages in conspicuous areas in the hospital informing patients of their rights. Ubial agreed to the suggestion of the solon and vowed to study how it can be properly implemented.

Rep. Jose Atienza Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY) expressed his concern about the safety of the tetanus vaccination program of the DOH, citing the results of tests made which showed that the vaccines used contained human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) which has adverse effects on the fertility of women.

Ubial claimed that the said test results were found to be erroneous, adding that the vaccines the DOH is administering have no ill effects on men and women alike.

Some Committee members expressed their disappointment over the discontinuance of the DOH's Dengue Vaccine Program. Ubial explained that studies conducted by a panel of experts convened by the DOH revealed that the dengue vaccine has potential health risks. The results of these studies were also supported by previous studies conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) was not convinced by what Ubial said, which led her to request the DOH Secretary to form a new set of experts to conduct further studies on the dengue vaccine. Ubial acceded to the Deputy Speaker's suggestion.

- Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)

Committee Vice Chair Rep. Napoleon Dy (3rd District, Isabela) sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DAR.

DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano said that under the FY 2017 NEP, the Department is set to receive P10.14 billion, which is 2.4% lower than its current budget of P10.12 billion. DAR's 2017 budget includes the P100 million requirement of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) for the compensation of landowners whose lands were covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

By expense class, DAR's 2017 proposed budget will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P4.27 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P4.21 billion; and capital outlay (CO), P1.66 billion.

Aside from the DAR's allocation, an additional P862.70 million will be allocated in 2017 for the implementation of the CARP by other implementing agencies, namely: Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), P233.25 million; Land Registration Authority (LRA), P270.79 million; National Irrigation Administration

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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sherwin Tugna (Party-list, CIBAC), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17 th Congress.
Dangerous Drugs	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2 nd District, Surigao del Norte), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17 th Congress.

COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	HB 3384 in consolidation with HBs 604, 657, 900, 1290, 1464, 1628, 2329,	Speaker Alvarez, Reprs. Erice, Treñas, Fortuno, Villafuerte, Sarmiento (E.), Deputy Speaker	Postponing the October 2016 <i>barangay</i> and <i>sangguniang kabataan</i> (SK) elections	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sherwin Tugna (Party-List, CIBAC), approved, subject to style and amendments, HB 3384 in consolidation with HBs 604, 657, 900, 1290, 1464, 1628, 2329, 3158, 3197, 3198 and 3225 and HR 51. The Secretariat was instructed to prepare the substitute bill based on the

Continuation... Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	3158, 3197, 3198 & 3225 and HR 51	Garcia, Reps. Ferrer (J.), Batocabe, Tugna, Velasco, Tambunting and Barbers		<p>agreements reached during the meeting, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the <i>barangay</i> and SK elections be moved to the fourth Monday of October 2017.</p> <p>COMELEC Chair Andres Bautista said that the Commission maintains a neutral position on the postponement of the barangay and SK elections. Nevertheless, he disclosed that COMELEC immediately suspended its preparations for the local elections when it was evident that both chambers of Congress and the Office of the President (OP) were inclined to postpone the elections this October.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Erice (2nd District, Caloocan City) said that it will be counter-productive for the country to experience other electoral fight just months after the national polls.</p> <p>Atty. Edmund Abesamis, national president of the <i>Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas</i>, supports the postponement of the local elections saying that it translates into huge savings for the government, and ensures the continuity of the programs and projects that have been initiated by the incumbent barangay officials. Abesamis further said that resetting the elections will provide ample time to discuss the much needed reforms in the barangay and SK systems.</p> <p>On the other hand, Ramon Casiple, chair of the Consortium on Electoral Reforms (CER), stressed that the postponement of local elections undermines the principles of democracy as it will result in having officials with no real mandate from the electorate.</p> <p>National Youth Commission (NYC) Executive Director Nielex Tupas said that although his office would want the SK election to push through, it would submit to the decision of Congress. He requested the creation of a task force on youth development to temporarily administer the youth programs while the new set of SK officials has not yet been elected.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Human Rights	Briefing by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on its powers and functions, and programs, activities, and projects	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), listened to the briefing conducted by CHR Commissioner Karen Lucia Gomez-Dumpit on the powers and functions as well as the programs and projects of the CHR.</p> <p>Gomez-Dumpit said that under Article XIII, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution, the CHR is vested with powers and functions which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate human rights violations;

<p>Continuation... Human Rights</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise visitorial power over places of detention; • Establish continuing human rights promotion program; • Recommend effective measures to promote human rights and provide assistance or compensation to victims; and • Monitor the Philippine government's compliance with international obligations. <p>Aside from its constitutional mandate, the CHR is also expected to comply with the Paris Principles, which is a set of international standards that frames and guides the works of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) like the CHR. As watchdogs, NHRIs are established to monitor and ensure that fundamental human rights principles are respected, protected and fulfilled by the state, Gomez-Dumpit added.</p> <p>The CHR also has specific responsibilities in the implementation of the following national laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA 9344 or the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006," which designates CHR as one of the members of the Juvenile Justice Council; • RA 9745 or the "Anti-Torture Act of 2009," which directs CHR and the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) to provide legal assistance in the investigation, monitoring and/or filing of complaints; • RA 9851 or the "International Humanitarian Law of 2009," which provides that CHR and other concerned agencies shall designate prosecutors and investigators on cases involving crimes against international humanitarian law; • RA 9710 or the "Magna Carta of Women," which designates CHR as a gender and development ombudsman; • RA 10353 or the "Anti-Enforced Disappearance Law of 2012," which authorizes the CHR to conduct regular, independent, unannounced and unrestricted visits or inspections to places of detention; and • RA 10368 or the "Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013," which establishes the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board (HRVCB) as an attached agency of the CHR, and designates the CHR as chair of the Human Rights Victims' Memorial Commission (HRVMC). <p>Gomez-Dumpit also presented the CHR's programs and projects which include, among others, the provision of legal and financial assistance to human rights victims, conduct of investigation and case management, provision of forensic services, exercise of jail visitation power, and witness protection and assistance. Other programs of the CHR are in the areas of human rights education and training, policy advocacy work, policy research, and monitoring of international obligations.</p> <p>Responding to the query of Rep. Glona Labadlabad (2nd District, Zamboanga del Norte) on the nature of activities that the CHR will undertake to promote human rights, Commissioner Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana said the CHR will primarily employ radio broadcast and the social media to expedite the dissemination of human rights advocacies to as many people as possible.</p> <p>The CHR was requested to submit its proposed legislative agenda for the Committee's consideration in its next meeting.</p>
<p>Dangerous Drugs</p>	<p>Briefing by the Philippine National Police (PNP) on several drug-related issues and concerns</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), listened to the briefing conducted by the Philippine National Police (PNP) on the current drug situation in the country and its major accomplishments in connection with its campaign against illegal drugs.</p>

<p>Continuation... Dangerous Drugs</p>		<p>Police Superintendent Camilo Pancratius Cascolan, PNP Acting Director for Operations, reported that 27% or 11,321 out of the 42,036 barangays nationwide are affected by the illegal drug trade. Based on the record of the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) as of June 30, 2016, at least 144,202 individuals are in the PNP watch list with Region 3 registering the highest number of individuals allegedly involved in drugs. The PNP is currently in the process of validating and updating the report of the BADAC, Cascolan said.</p> <p>One of the initiatives undertaken by the PNP to intensify its campaign against illegal drugs is the crafting of the “Double Barrel” plan. The plan involves a two-pronged approach, namely: “Project Tokhang” or “Tuktok Hangyo,” which involves visitation of residences of suspected drug personalities to persuade them to stop their nefarious activities; and “Project HVT” (High Value Target), which involves the conduct of police operations against drug lords and drug syndicates.</p> <p>He added that the PNP is continuously implementing its five-point anti-drug strategies dubbed as “Kontra Droga Charlie” -- demand reduction, supply reduction, community involvement, legal offensive, and international cooperation.</p> <p>The PNP is in the process of cleaning up its ranks, Cascolan said, as he revealed that 141 policemen were found positive after recently conducting random drug testing. He also disclosed that 346 police officers suspected of wrongdoings are in the PNP watch list.</p> <p>Cascolan averred that the PNP’s relentless campaign against illegal drugs continues to gain momentum as evidenced by the voluntary surrender of more than 600,000 drug users and drug pushers; arrest of 15,098 persons; and killing of 1,029 persons during several buy-bust operations that the PNP conducted from July 1 to September 5, 2016. He also highlighted the significant downward trend in the crime index, from 17,105 in 2015 to 11,800 in 2016 or a 31% reduction. He likewise said that the government has the trust and approval of the public in its war against drugs.</p> <p>On the other hand, Cascolan acknowledged the challenges the PNP faces in its illegal drugs campaign, among which are: unsupportive local government executives (LGEs); unpreparedness of the local government units (LGUs) to assist in the rehabilitation of drug users; and inadequate budget for its intelligence-gathering and enforcement activities.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel “Chiquiting” Sagarbarria (2nd District, Negros Oriental) expressed concern about the low conviction rate of drug cases filed by the PNP. Admitting that the solon’s observation is true, Magalong said the cases are lost due to court findings of insufficiency of evidence and probable cause, and irregularity or illegality of arrest, search and seizure operations.</p> <p>Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan) recommended giving financial assistance to police officers who are facing legal battles as a result of the performance of their duties.</p> <p>Rep. Barbers manifested the Committee’s support to the anti-illegal drug campaign of the PNP. He requested the PNP to submit a list of LGEs who remain uncooperative in the government’s war against drugs.</p>
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