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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	Briefing by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on its operational and financial performance, contribution to the government social programs, and plans for 2017	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), started hearing the budget presentations of different government agencies after the culmination of the briefings of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) on the proposed National Expenditure Program (NEP) for fiscal year 2017.</p> <p>First in line was the PCSO, with General Manager Jose Ferdinand Rojas II presenting the agency's operational and financial performance, contribution to the government social programs, and plans for year 2017. Following are the highlights of Rojas' report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2010 up to the first quarter of 2016, PCSO generated a total of P191.56 billion in revenues from its Lotto, Lotto Express (Keno), and Sweepstakes games; • Small Town Lottery (STL) operations earned P4.7 billion in gross sales in 2014, P4.8 billion in 2015, and P1.2 billion in the first quarter of 2016; • PCSO paid P24.08 billion in taxes to the national government from 2010 up to June 2015; • PCSO's allocations to the Charity Fund from 2010 to June 2015 include the amount of P29.3 billion as part of mandatory contributions (required by law), P32.4 billion for regular and traditional beneficiaries, and P994 million for other health care-related programs and projects. <p>Charity Fund allocation is 30% of PCSO's net receipts; the rest go to Prize Fund (55%) and Operating Fund (15%).</p> <p>Rojas also presented PCSO's accomplishments under various programs, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Medical Assistance Program (IMAP) - provides medical assistance to indigent patients and victims of calamities and national emergencies; • Institutional Partner (IP) Program - provides financial grants to orphanages, homes for the aged, and homes for the street children; • Endowment Fund Program - provides financial grants to hospitals, other health care facilities, and government and non-government organizations; and • Ambulance and Mobile Clinic Donation Program - grants ambulance units to local government units and qualified hospitals and institutions. <p>For 2017, Rojas said PCSO aims to sustain revenue growth, expand charity services, and enhance the organization's capabilities through the expansion of STL operations, recruitment of additional Lotto outlet partners, development of mass-based programs, and opening of new marketing channels and new branches nationwide.</p> <p>Citing the success of the national lottery in Malaysia, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon) suggested that PCSO should hold lotto draws on a national scale instead of separate draws for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. This, according to Rep. Suarez, will translate to increased revenues for the PCSO. Rojas promised to study the suggestion made by Rep. Suarez.</p>

Continuation... Appropriations		KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Harry Roque inquired on the steps being undertaken by the PCSO against unscrupulous operators who are using the STL as cover for illegal <i>jueteng</i> operations. Rojas said that one of the deterrents PCSO established is the presumptive monthly retail receipts (PMRR) system wherein STL operators are required to meet a monthly sales quota. This, according to Rojas, will also prevent operators from under-reporting their income.
	Briefing by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) on the agency's accomplishments, contributions to nation-building, and plans and programs for 2017	<p>The Committee listened to the briefing conducted by PAGCOR officials on the gaming agency's operational and financial performance, contribution to the government's social programs, and plans and programs for 2017.</p> <p>PAGCOR Assistant Vice President for Accounting Sharon Quintanilla reported the following, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAGCOR's total income for 2015 increased to P47.21 billion from P39.99 billion in 2014, which enabled the agency to remit P29.08 billion to the government as its "contributions to nation-building," its highest remittance in 30 years. • For the first half of 2016, PAGCOR generated a gross income of P26.91 billion, of which P17.42 billion is remitted to the government as the agency's contributions to nation-building. • PAGCOR is projecting a significant decrease in its income in 2017 due to the eventual closure of all electronic gaming sites. <p>Quintanilla also gave a brief update on the Entertainment City Complex, which as of June 30, has three integrated resorts in operation, namely: Resorts World Manila, Solaire Resort and Casino, and the City of Dreams Manila. The Okada Manila Resorts (formerly Manila Bay Resorts) is set to open on November 16, while the West Side City Resorts World is expected to open in 2020.</p> <p>On PAGCOR's major thrusts, plans and programs for 2017, Arnell Ignacio, PAGCOR Assistant Vice President for Community Relations and Services Department, said that PAGCOR is still committed to increase the gaming industry's gross revenues and its contributions to the national government despite the policy shift away from electronic gaming. PAGCOR Chair and CEO Andrea Domingo said that the agency will pursue alternative sources of revenues to cover the anticipated revenue losses.</p> <p>In response to the queries of some lawmakers regarding the status of their requests for school buildings in their respective districts, Domingo said that in line with the recent pronouncements of President Rodrigo Duterte, PAGCOR will focus on providing assistance to health-related projects.</p> <p>Domingo disclosed that the possible privatization of PAGCOR-owned casinos is being studied with the end in view of reducing the agency's function to mere regulation of the gaming industry.</p> <p>Reacting to PAGCOR's intention to limit the access of poor Filipinos to gambling, Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) posed the question of whether it is not a form of discrimination, gambling being a form of recreation to a lot of Filipinos.</p> <p>PAGCOR was requested to submit reports and documents pertinent to the operations and financial status of PAGCOR-owned casinos, as well as copy of the contracts entered into by PAGCOR with private casino owners.</p>