

Committee Daily Bulletin



17th Congress
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 34
October 19, 2016

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Constitutional Amendments	House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) as Substitute Resolution to House Joint Resolutions (HJRs) 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7, HCRs 4 & 5, Resolution of Both Houses (RBHs) 1, 2, 5, 8 & 9, HBs 312 & 1463, HRs 32, 52 & 129	Reps. Violago, Benitez, Oaminal & Gomez, Deputy Speakers Singson & Macapagal-Arroyo, Rep. Almario, Speaker Alvarez, Rep. Belmonte (F.), Deputy Speaker Abu, Reps. Gonzales (A.), Floirendo, Deputy Speaker Garcia, Reps. Sarmiento (E.), Tambunting, Barbers & Espino	Calling on the Congress of the Philippines to constitute itself as a constituent assembly for the purpose of proposing amendments to, or revisions of, the 1987 Constitution	<p>The Committee, chaired by Southern Leyte Rep. Roger "Oging" Mercado, approved the House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) said the HCR is a substitute resolution to all the measures referred to the Committee calling on Congress to constitute itself as a constituent assembly as a mode to amend the 1987 Philippine Constitution.</p> <p>The HCR got the nod of 33 Committee Members, with seven voting against it and three abstaining.</p> <p>All the Members present were registered as co-authors of the HCR, except those who abstained and voted not in favor.</p> <p>A constituent assembly is one of three modes by which the Constitution may be amended or revised, the other two being through a constitutional convention and people's initiative. Any amendment to or revision of the Constitution shall only be valid when ratified by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite which shall be held not earlier than 60 days nor later than 90 days after the approval of such amendment or revision. (<i>Article XVII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution</i>)</p>
Labor and Employment	Substitute Bill to HBs 353, 1649 & 3942	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Villarica & Salon	Reforming the National Apprenticeship Program and providing standards for the training and employment of apprentices, and regulatory standards for accreditation of apprenticeship programs	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Randolph Ting (3 rd District, Cagayan), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 353, 1649, and 3942.
	HBs 64, 80, 1044 & 1676	Reps. Nograles (K.A.), Aglipay-Villar, De Jesus & Revilla	Strengthening compliance with occupational safety and health standards and providing penalties for violations thereof	The Committee approved the draft Committee Report on HB 64, in consolidation with HBs 80, 1044 and 1676.
	HBs 172, 852, 1937, 2821, 3332 & 3795	Reps. Nograles (K.A.), Villarica, Villar, Suansing (E.), Noel & Tupas	Providing assistance to new graduates by waiving government fees and charges collected in connection with the issuance of documents required in their application for employment	The Committee approved the draft Committee Report on HB 172, in consolidation with HBs 852, 1937, 2821, 3332 and 3795.
	HBs 354, 928, 1238 & 1357	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Abaya, Deputy Speaker	Establishing a Productivity Improvement Program, repealing for the purpose RA 6971, otherwise known as	The Committee approved the draft Committee Report on HB 354, in consolidation with HBs 928, 1238 and 1357.

Continuation... Labor and Employment		Macapagal- Arroyo & Rep. Nogralles (K.A.)	the Productivity Incentives Act of 1990	
	HB 499	Rep. Nogralles (K.A.)	Instituting worker's claim as statutory first lien on the assets of a bankrupt employer, amending for this purpose Article 110 of Presidential Decree 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 499.
	HBs 989, 1353 & 3267	Reps. Chipeco, Nogralles (K.A.) & Villarica	Regulating the practice of employers in posting notices of termination of employment of former employees in newspapers, social media and other public information venues	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 989, in consolidation with HBs 1353 and 3267.
Land Use (Special Committee)	HBs 52, 347, 461,1252, 1599, 2589, & 2634	Rep. Bag-ao, Deputy Speaker Quimbo, Reps. Tugna, Biazon, Baguilat, Rodriguez (M.) & Villarin	Instituting land use and management policy, providing the implementing mechanisms	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6 th District, Quezon City), approved the seven bills.
Ways and Means	HBs 292 & 4005	Reps. Suansing (H.) & Sy- Alvarado	Imposing excise tax on sugar sweetened beverages by inserting a new Section 150-A in the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, will deliberate further on HBs 292 and 3720 in its next meeting.
	HB 3720	Rep. Lanete	Amending certain provisions of RA 8424, otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, by imposing a tax on the production, sale and consumption of carbonated drinks and juices	<p>At the outset, Rep. Cua informed the Committee that Rep. Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan) has relayed to the Committee his intention to withdraw his bill, HB 4005.</p> <p>BUHAY Party-List Rep. Jose Atienza asked the authors if they have consulted the consumers and other stakeholders of the sugar sweetened beverages (SSB) that will be directly affected by the increase in taxes.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), co-author of HB 292, said public consultations will be conducted after discussing the legislative proposal with the concerned government agencies.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Undersecretary Karl Kendrick Chua expressed support for the bills, particularly the revenue and health measures proposed in HB 292, including the anti-obesity programs and the restriction of the said drinks on school children. Chua added that the DOF will study the system for the earmarking of the revenues collected from the additional taxes on SSB products.</p> <p>Likewise, Department of Health (DOH) Deputy Executive Director Azucena Dayanghirang supports the proposed measures saying that the reduced consumption of sugar sweetened beverages will not only be beneficial to the consumers' health but will also mean savings for them. She also committed DOH's participation in the formulation and promulgation of the</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the proposed law together with the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA).</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
HBs 1889 & 3010	Rep. Defensor & Deputy Speaker Quimbo	Granting amnesty in estate tax		The Committee will deliberate further on the five bills granting tax amnesty on internal revenue taxes in its next meeting.
HB 3655	Rep. Romero	Increasing revenues and to provide the foundation for an effective implementation of tax reforms by granting an amnesty on all unpaid internal revenue taxes imposed by the national government for taxable year 2015 and prior years		<p>Rep. Arthur Defensor Jr. (3rd District, Iloilo) said HB 1889 grants amnesty only for unpaid estate taxes, thus should be taken up separately, along with HB 3010, from the other bills granting amnesty for all unpaid internal revenue taxes.</p> <p>Chua stressed the importance of conducting a study on the mechanics of the proposed amnesty.</p>
HB 3832	Minority Leader Suarez	Granting tax amnesty on all unpaid revenue tax liabilities for taxable period January 2006 to June 2016		Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Deputy Commissioner Jesus Clint Aranas said the revenue agency is in fact considering giving tax amnesty to all types of taxes without exception.
HB 4011	Rep. Limkaichong	Enhancing revenue administration and increasing revenue collection by granting an amnesty on all unpaid internal revenue taxes imposed by the national government for taxable year 2015 and prior years		<p>Deputy Speaker Romero "Miro" Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) suggested that BIR should have an absolute power to look into the bank accounts of tax evaders as a means to maximize tax collections.</p> <p>Likewise, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon) told BIR that it should relentlessly pursue cases against big-time tax evaders until they are put to jail to show its strong commitment to run after tax evaders. He added that the BIR must implement an acceptable amnesty program which should be publicly announced to ensure the success of the program.</p>
HB 2930	Rep. Umali	Amending and extending for 25 years the franchise granted to Smart Communications, Inc. (formerly Smart Information Technologies, Inc.) under RA 7294, or the law granting Smart Information Technologies, Inc. (SMART) a franchise to establish, install, maintain, lease and operate integrated telecommunications/ computer/electronic services and stations throughout the Philippines for public domestic and international telecommunications		<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 2930 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Quimbo questioned the passage of RA 10900 and 64 other franchise bills which did not pass through the Committee on Ways and Means during the 16th Congress despite these bills having tax provisions. (Republic Act 10900 extended for another 25 years the franchise granted to Bell Telecommunication Philippines Inc.)</p> <p>COOP-NATCCO Party-List Rep. Anthony Bravo suggested that local government units (LGUs) be consulted about HB 2930 because its tax provisions might run counter to the principle of local autonomy particularly in the area of taxation.</p> <p>Section 9 of RA 7294, as proposed to be amended under HB 2930, states that the grantee (SMART) shall pay a value-added tax on all gross receipts of the business transacted under the grantee's franchise, in lieu of all taxes collected or levied by an authority, including city, municipal, provincial or national.</p>

<p>Youth and Sports Development</p>	<p>HBs 535, 545, 1907 & 3447</p>	<p>Reps. Gonzaga, Sambar, Angara-Castillo & Primicias-Agabas</p>	<p>Establishing a sports complex known as the National Sports Training Center and providing funds therefor</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by ABONO Party-List Rep. Conrado Estrella III, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to further study the proposed measures.</p> <p>PBA Party-List Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar, author of HB 545, said the establishment of the National Sports Training Center (NSTC) will provide the 800 national athletes and 300 coaches a decent venue for an elite training that is at par with international standards. He urged the Committee for the immediate passage of his bill which has been approved already by the Committee during the 16th Congress.</p> <p>Pointing out the outdated and poor condition of the sports facilities in the country, Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) Chair William Ramirez expressed his support for the bills. The construction of a new, decent and modernized NSTC is long overdue, he said, as he suggested that the proposed training center be constructed inside the Clark Green City where neighboring communities may have access to the sports facilities.</p> <p>However, Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) President Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said the Clark Green City is still undergoing on-site development, thus, it still lacks basic services such as electricity, water and internet connection. He instead suggested the 50-hectare land being offered by the Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) to be the site for the proposed NSTC.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila) underscored the importance of building training camps at a high altitude place where air is thinner or with low oxygen level, which prompts the body to produce more red blood cells that can carry oxygen to the muscles - a physiological change that boosts best performance. He added that training centers should be free from pollution and away from distraction.</p> <p>Mark Velasco, PSC's national training director, affirmed that it is advisable for athletes to train in high altitudes with at least 8,000 feet above sea level.</p> <p>The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the CIAC were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers on the matter and a blue print of the proposed NSTC.</p>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--	--	--

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)				<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by the Committee's Vice Chair Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), solicited the comments of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS) on several measures proposing amendments to the charters of the GSIS and SSS.</p> <p>The GSIS was represented by Senior Vice President Racquel Buensalida of the Corporate Services Group and Vice President Lucio Yu Jr. of the Risk Management Office. On the other hand, the SSS was represented by Senior Vice President Voltaire Agas of the Legal Services Division, Legal Counsel Joseph Desunia, and Deputy Chief Actuary Rentony Gibe of the Actuarial Services Division.</p> <p>Below are the comments of the GSIS and SSS on these measures.</p>
	HB 1466	Rep. Abayon	Mandating the payment of all retirement benefits to all government and private employees on the date of their retirement	Both the GSIS and SSS interposed no objection to HBs 1466 and 3544. The SSS said that there is already an existing office order mandating them to release the payment of retirement benefits on the day of retirement subject to submission of complete requirements.
	HB 3544	Rep. Castelo	Mandating the SSS to process and to pay claims of legitimate claimants and beneficiaries within 30 days upon full submission of all necessary application documents	However, the GSIS objects to the P200,000 penalty under Section 7 that will be imposed for failure to comply with the provisions of the proposed law. The GSIS also argued that the responsibility for the processing of required papers and other documents relative to the application for retirement under Section 2 must be equally shared by the retirees.
	HB 1592	Rep. Castelo	Ensuring that pension funds of SSS and the GSIS are subject of a culture of transparency and internal system of disclosure in all their business and corporate affairs	Both the GSIS and SSS agreed that HB 1592 may no longer be legislated as they are already subjected to various oversight measures and constant audit by the Commission on Audit (COA). They likewise adhere to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) No. 2 on the Freedom of Information (FOI). (EO No. 2 operationalizes in the executive branch the people's constitutional right to information and the full disclosure and transparency in the public service.)
	HB 1864	Rep. De Venecia	Enhancing the guidelines of transferring an account from one social security insurance system to another, amending for the purpose RA 7699, otherwise known as the Portability Law	Both the GSIS and SSS oppose the liberalized conditions proposed in HB 1864 as it would be unfair to the regular members who, under existing laws, have to comply with the 15-year minimum requirement to be eligible for retirement benefits for GSIS members and 10-year minimum requirement for SSS members.
	HB 2449	Rep. Yap (A.)	Providing for automatic adjustment of the basic monthly pension for retired personnel covered by the GSIS and the SSS to the prevailing cost of living index	Both the GSIS and SSS expressed their reservations on HB 2449 as it will endanger the sustainability of their insurance funds.

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)	HB 2865	Rep. Escudero	Establishing an Education Trust Fund (ETF) for grantees of GSIS and SSS members	<p>The GSIS opposes HB 2865, citing its adverse experience in the past when it partnered with Prudential Life Plan, Inc. for a similar education plan. The proposed law will likewise add up to the existing mandate of the GSIS, causing an overflow in its workload.</p> <p>On the other hand, the SSS said that it is open to the establishment of an ETF provided that a separate fund and a department will be established to handle ETF operations.</p>
	HB 185	Rep. Olivarez	Requiring the SSS to declare dividends, further amending RA 1161, or the Social Security Law	The SSS commented that HB 185 is not feasible since SSS does not issue life insurance policies to its members.
	HB 2208	Deputy Speaker Arroyo	Providing for unemployment benefit to be provided by the SSS, amending for the purpose RA 8282, or the law strengthening the SSS, thereby amending RA 1161	The SSS agreed to consult with the authors on the scheme that will be developed to fund the unemployment or involuntary separation benefits espoused in HBs 2208 and 3277.
	HB 3277	Rep. Ocampo	Expanding the benefits of the SSS so as to provide unemployment or involuntary separation benefits, thereby amending RA 8282	
	HB 2505	Rep. Ortega (V.)	Establishing mandatory coverage in the SSS of small farmers and farmworkers, amending for the purpose Sections 9(A), 9-A(5), and 10 of RA 8282 and Sections 8(3) and 23(9) of RA 7606 or the Magna Carta of Small Farmers	The SSS agreed to discuss and clarify with the author the specific benefits that will be provided to farmers under HB 2505. It will also submit the list of programs it is implementing that are intended for the informal sector and the list of requirements that need to be complied with.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agrarian Reform	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee has general jurisdiction over all matters directly and principally relating to agrarian reform; the resettlement of and other support services for agrarian reform beneficiaries; and the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (RA 6657) and the CARP Extension with Reforms Law (RA 9700).</p> <p>During the meeting, Rep. Relampagos presented the accomplishments of the Committee during the 16th Congress, highlighting its role in the enactment of RA 10878, which strengthens and institutionalizes direct credit support of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) to agrarian reform beneficiaries, small farmers and fisherfolk. He also mentioned that the Committee may exercise its oversight function to investigate issues or evaluate the implementation of laws within its jurisdiction.</p>
	Briefing by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)	<p>DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano presented the Department's mandate, plans and programs, and major accomplishments.</p> <p>Mariano said DAR spearheads the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) through land tenure improvement, agrarian justice, and coordinated delivery of essential support services to beneficiaries. He further explained that by virtue of Executive Order (EO) No. 129-A, series of 1987, DAR is mandated to acquire, administer, distribute, and develop agricultural lands for purposes of agrarian reform.</p>

<p>Continuation... Agrarian Reform</p>		<p>To date, he said, there are over 206,000 hectares of agricultural land yet to be issued Notice of Coverage (NOC). To effectively pursue its mandate, Mariano averred that DAR must also be granted the authority to cover agricultural lands not yet placed within the ambit of the agrarian reform program, and to warrant the protection and security of tenure of farmers who were previously awarded agricultural lands.</p> <p>Mariano also reported DAR's major accomplishments which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed 4.80 million hectares of land from 1972 to June 2016, which is equivalent to 88.6% of its scope of 5.42 million hectares. Out of the distributed lands, 4.72 million hectares were issued with Emancipation Patents (EPs) and Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs); and • Resolved 486,082 out of 494,129 cases received, which translates to a high resolution rate of 98%. This leaves the DAR Adjudication Board (DARAB) a total of 8,047 pending cases as of June 2016. <p>From 2016 to 2019, DAR targets to distribute a total of 400,000 hectares to benefit 379,236 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), which will leave a balance of 221,085 hectares of undistributed lands, including 148,636 landholdings classified as "problematic."</p> <p>The DAR Secretary talked of the need for the passage of a new agrarian reform law that will cover more than 621,000 hectares of agricultural lands and other lands subject for coverage.</p> <p>In response to the query of Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay) on the status of the <i>Tulay ng Pangulo Para Sa Kaunlarang Pang-Agraryo</i> (TPKP) Program, the DAR Secretary said the implementation of the TPKP will continue under his administration. TPKP involves the construction, installation and establishment of "universal bridges" in priority agrarian reform communities (ARCs) and CARP-covered areas.</p> <p>DAR was requested to submit status reports and data on idle government lands and on lands distributed under the CARP that remain unproductive.</p>
<p>Ecology</p>	<p>Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee has general jurisdiction over all matters directly and principally relating to ecosystem management, including pollution control.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing said there are 38 House Bills so far referred to the Committee for its consideration.</p>
	<p>Briefing by the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-EMB)</p>	<p>The Committee listened to the briefing conducted by the EMB on its mandate, policy thrusts, and issues and concerns relative to the implementation of environmental laws.</p> <p>EMB Hazardous Waste Management Section Chief Geri Geronimo Sañez said that the Bureau is mandated to implement the following environmental laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD 1586 (Environmental Impact Statement System); • RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990); • RA 8749 (Clean Air Act of 1999); • RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000); • RA 9275 (Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004);and • RA 9512 (Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008). <p>The EMB is also mandated to provide research and laboratory services and serve as secretariat in the adjudication of pollution cases pursuant to</p>

<p>Continuation... Ecology</p>		<p>EO 192, Sañez added. (EO 192, s.1987 provides for the reorganization of the DENR.)</p> <p>On the status of air quality, Sañez reported that air pollution in Metro Manila has increased to 163 micrograms per normal cubic meters or by 25.4% during the first half of 2010. Citing a study conducted by the World Bank, about 18 million people in urban areas in the country are exposed to air pollution, making it a major cause of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.</p> <p>To address this concern, Sañez said that efforts are geared towards reducing the TSP (total suspended particles) levels on pollutants generated by motor vehicles and other industrial and area sources. The EMB is also coordinating with concerned government agencies and other stakeholders in monitoring 330 private emission testing centers and with the local government units (LGUs) in banning open burning.</p> <p>Noting that the figures presented by Sañez are already outdated, Rep. Suansing requested the EMB to submit an updated report on the status of air pollution in Metro Manila.</p> <p>As to the water quality situation, Sañez said that the water bodies in major urban centers, including Metro Manila, are already unfit for human activities. Sañez added that the country's sewage generally drains out to open water bodies, contributing heavily to the pollution of its water sources.</p> <p>Sañez said that the EMB has launched programs to address the decreasing water quality especially in urban areas, such as the Beach Ecowatch Program, Industrial Ecowatch Program, and Adopt-an-Estero Program.</p> <p>With regard to the status of solid waste disposal and management on a nationwide scale, Sañez reported that about 10 million tons of wastes are generated annually and may increase by 40% in the next decade; only 7,680 out of the 42,000 barangays have material recovery facilities; and only 338 out of the 1,610 cities and municipalities have completed their solid waste management plans.</p> <p>Sañez said the EMB provides technical assistance to LGUs in the formulation and implementation of the solid waste management plans pursuant to the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, as well as files cases against LGUs found not compliant with this law.</p> <p>The EMB also reported its accomplishments relative to the implementation of the other environmental laws, particularly the Environmental Impact Statement System, Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act, and Environmental Awareness and Education Act.</p> <p>Sañez affirmed the country's commitments with the international community under various international environmental protocols and conventions.</p> <p>Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN) inquired on the status of the 2,500 tons of waste shipped to the country, through the Manila Port, from Canada in 2013. Sañez said that Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 1 Judge Tita Bughao Alisuag has already issued an order to return the garbage to Canada.</p>
<p>Labor and Employment</p>	<p>Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Randolph Ting (3rd District, Cagayan), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee also created six subcommittees and designated their chairpersons, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor and Standards - Benguet Rep. Ronald Cosalan;

Continuation... Labor and Employment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Relations - Rep. Vicente “Ching” Veloso (3rd District, Leyte); • Workers with Special Concerns - Dinagat Islands Rep. Kaka Bag-ao; • Human Resource Development - SBP Party-List Rep. Ricardo Belmonte Jr.; • Employment; and • External Affairs. <p>The chairpersons of the last two subcommittees will be named at a later date.</p>
Land Use (Special Committee)	Approval of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee has general jurisdiction over all matters directly and principally relating to land use issues inclusive of the enhancement of resource use and management of indigenous cultural communities, land valuation regulation, preservation of historical and cultural heritage sites, and public-private partnership, as well as linkages among national and local agencies and stakeholders in land resource management.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Youth and Sports Development	Briefing by the National Youth Commission (NYC)	<p>The Committee, chaired by ABONO Party-List Rep. Conrado Estrella III, listened to the briefing of the National Youth Commission (NYC) on its mandate, thrusts, and plans and programs.</p> <p>NYC Chair and Chief Executive Officer Cariza “Aiza” Seguerra informed the Committee that NYC is the policy-making coordinating body of all youth-related institutions, programs, projects, and activities of the government. She added that NYC is also mandated to conduct a national youth study to determine the current condition and situation of the Filipino youth.</p> <p>Seguerra, however, lamented that even with the relevance and importance of its mandate, the NYC’s resources are not enough to fully advance its advocacies. She then requested the help of the Committee for the increase of the NYC’s budget for 2017.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the NYC still continues to implement various programs despite its meager budget. Seguerra further said that for 2016, the Commission’s priority thrusts include the conduct of a convention of youth leaders called “National Youth Parliament,” to formulate policy recommendations that would address youth issues and serve as government’s guide in program development; the formulation of the Philippine Youth Development Plan 2017-2022; and the NYC’s involvement in the implementation of the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Law, as well as in the formulation of the law’s implementing rules and regulations (IRR).</p> <p>For 2017, Seguerra said the NYC plans to further strengthen its Youth Organization Registration Program (YORP) which aims to form a network of provincial youth organizations; establish NYC youth hubs in various local government units (LGUs) nationwide; and conduct provincial youth fairs.</p>

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Women and Gender Equality	"Forum on Federalism: What is in it for Women?"	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar (Party-List, DIWA), in partnership with the Association of Women Legislators Foundation, Inc. (AWLFI) headed by Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica (4th District, Bulacan), conducted a forum dubbed "Forum on Federalism: What is in it for Women?" at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>In delivering her message to the forum participants, Rep. Villarica expressed hope that this forum will enable the legislators to understand better how federalism will impact on women and how it works, the knowledge of which they can impart to their constituents.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Aglipay-Villar spoke of the need for women to "join the journey" to federalism, as she noted that it is the male perspective that usually dominates discussions on federalism, and even in other fields, both here and in the international arena.</p> <p>Dr. Socorro Reyes, regional governance adviser of the Center for Legislative Development and a women's rights advocate, gave an overview of federalism and how it impacts on women especially in terms of their role in legislation and political representation and participation.</p> <p>Reyes opined that federalism can be a key to development since the approach would be particular to every regional government which can form individual development strategies suited to its specific needs and capacity.</p> <p>Dr. Maria Ela Atienza, chair of the Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines (UP), discussed the track record of the decentralization program under the Local Government Code and the opportunities for improving women's health under a federal system. She underscored the need for reforms to address women's health issues such as the high rate of maternal mortality and teenage pregnancies, as well as to improve the health services for women.</p> <p>Atienza mentioned that women can once again play a substantive role in any move to change or amend the constitution as she recalled that the main driver of the 1987 constitutional change was a woman.</p> <p>During the open forum, Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) inquired on what courses of action may be taken if a particular regional government under a federal system fails to properly utilize its funds.</p> <p>Atienza said that the national government can come in should there be failure of governance at the regional level. For her part, Reyes said that issues such as fund misuse can be avoided if, right from the start, proper structures and systems are in place.</p> <p>Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate) wanted to know how federalism can truly address the issues and concerns at the local level and how it can be better disseminated and explained particularly at the grassroots level.</p> <p>Reyes explained that the shift to a federal form of government should allow the local executives to formulate policies and reforms that would address the problems specific to the area and advance the interests of their constituents. Atienza added that information dissemination can be facilitated by the distribution of a primer on federalism written in the local dialect.</p> <p>In closing, Rep. Villarica thanked the lady legislators, resource speakers, and guests for their presence and participation in the forum.</p>