

# Committee Daily Bulletin



17<sup>th</sup> Congress  
First Regular Session

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HB 2926	Speaker Alvarez	Establishing the Philippine National Banana Research and Development Center in the City of Panabo, Province of Davao del Norte, to be known as the Antonio O. Floirendo Sr. Banana Research and Development Center and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), approved HB 2926.</p> <p>Expressing support for the measure, Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said that the proposed banana research center will help address the perennial problem of pests and diseases affecting bananas.</p> <p>Piñol also remarked that during President Rodrigo Duterte's visit to Japan, the Japanese government has committed to procure its gross demand for bananas from the Philippines on the condition that it shall be grown in conflict-stricken areas in Mindanao as Japan's way of helping the region's local economy.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their comments and recommendations on the proposed bill.</p>
	HBs 37, 189, 526, 558, 1197, 1887, 1943, 2247, 2251, 2812, 2857, 2880, 3013, 3151, 3302, 3505, 3853, 4162 & 4170	Reps. Yap (A.), Bravo, Garbin, Casilao, Loyola, Estrella, Santos-Recto, Panganiban, Dalipe, Yu, Tan (A.), Oaminal, Geron, Alejano, Villanueva, Primicias-Agabas, Salon, Deputy Speaker Singson & Unabia	Abolishing irrigation service fees imposed on farmers by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), amending for the purpose RA 3601 or the law creating NIA, and other related laws	<p>The Committee decided to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a substitute bill to the 28 bills.</p> <p>NIA Administrator Florencio Padernal expressed his support for the abolition of the irrigation service fees being collected by NIA from the farmers.</p> <p>Just like highways built by the government and being used at no cost to the general public, Piñol said irrigation systems which have become part of the patrimonial property of the State should also be used by the farmers free of charge.</p>
	HB 2133	Rep. Villafuerte	Renaming the NIA to National Irrigation Development Administration (NIDA) and converting it from a government corporation to a line agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA)	<p>At present, irrigation service fees range from P2,500 to as high as P6,000 per hectare, according to the farmers' associations present during the meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District, Surigao del Sur) expressed dismay that the NIA grossly failed as a corporate entity. He stressed that when NIA was created in 1963 pursuant to RA 3601, the intention was to make its operations self-sustaining. However, 95% of NIA's</p>
	HBs 2150, 2902, 3119, 3589 & 3595	Reps. Pineda, Tupas, Fortunato, Antonino & Suansing (E.)	Abolishing the collection of irrigation service fees and condoning unpaid debts, amending for the purpose RA 3601	

Continuation... Agriculture and Food	HB 2455	Rep. Yap (A)	Providing for a six-year accelerated irrigation program for the construction of irrigation projects in the remaining unproductive, un-irrigated but potentially irrigable lands nationwide	operational budget is still being subsidized by the national government, and the revenues from collecting irrigation service fees have not translated into significant irrigation projects for the marginalized farmers.
	HB 3338	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Abolishing NIA and transferring its powers, functions, supervision and control of funds and appropriations, records equipment and property to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)	The resource persons present were requested to submit their official position papers on the matter.
	HB 4056	Rep. Chavez	Abolishing payment of irrigation service fees but not to include the owners of commercial plantations with irrigation delivery contract with NIA and to undertake a 10-year acceleration program for the construction of irrigation projects	
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HB 3305	Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Providing for the regulation and supervision of payment systems	The Committee, chaired by Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, approved HB 3305.  Payment systems provide the channels through which funds are transferred among banks and other institutions to discharge payment obligations arising from economic and financial transactions across the entire economy. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) takes the lead in promoting an efficient payments and settlements system. (www.bsp.gov.ph)  A bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 16 <sup>th</sup> Congress.
	HBs 492 & 3975	Rep. Turabin-Hataman & Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Amending RA 6848, also known as the Charter of Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines (AAIIBP), and providing for the regulation and organization of an expanded Islamic banking system in the Philippines	The Committee decided to discuss the two bills separately after noting that they have different subject matters, even if they have the same title. Thereafter, the Committee approved HB 3975.  On the other hand, the Committee decided to create a technical working group (TWG), to be headed by Rep. Sitti Djalia Turabib-Hataman (Party-List, AMIN), to study further HB 492.  On the question raised by Rep. Henry Oaminal (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Misamis Occidental), AAIIBP Director (OIC) Lilia Baun said that AAIIBP, which is a subsidiary of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), has nine branches, eight of which are located in strategic cities in Mindanao.
	HB 4283, in consolidation with HBs 731, 2436 & 3456	Reps. Evardone, Nograles (K.), Collantes, & Oaminal	Amending RA 7653, also known as the New Central Bank Act	The Committee approved with amendments HB 4283 in consolidation with HBs 731, 2436 and 3456.  Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Pampanga) proposed the inclusion in the bill of a provision that will remove from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) the authority to supervise and exercise regulatory functions over the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to strengthen the latter's independence. However, Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo said that the BSP Governor may still continue to sit as chair of the AMLC Board.

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HB 3803	Rep. Caminero	Renaming the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) to the Farmers Bank of the Philippines, amending for the purpose Section 74 of RA 3844, or the Agricultural Land Reform Code	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 3803 in its next meeting.</p> <p>LBP Executive Vice President Julio Climaco said an estimated P1.3 billion will be spent to rename the bank.</p> <p>The LBP was requested to submit to the Committee the justification for the cost of renaming the LBP.</p>
Basic Education and Culture	Substitute Bill to HB 2576	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Strengthening the rules on the proper use and display of our national symbols and the rendition of the national anthem, amending for the purpose of RA 8491, otherwise known as the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Evelina Escudero (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Sorsogon), approved with amendments the Substitute Bill to HB 2576, subject to the submission of the proposed amendments to Section 34 (to be renumbered as Section 33), Prohibited Acts, of RA 8491 by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and Department of Education (DepEd).
	HB 199	Rep. Cari	Establishing a national high school in Barangay Banahao, City of Baybay, Province of Leyte to be known as Banahao National High School and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 199 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 1835	Rep. Sandoval	Establishing a national science and mathematics high school in Barangay Hulong-Duhat, City of Malabon, Metro Manila, to be known as Malabon City National Science and Mathematics High School and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 1835 and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Malabon City Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval II, author of HB 1835, acceded to the proposal of Rep. Escudero to change the name of the school to Malabon City National Science and Mathematics School, removing the word "High" from the school's name.</p> <p>The Office of the Mayor of Malabon City will submit to the Committee a copy of the Deed of Usufruct for the land that will be used for the establishment of this high school.</p> <p>The bill shall be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.</p>
	HB 3502	Rep. Vargas	Mandating the nationwide establishment of a public library in each city and municipality	The Committee agreed to lay on the table HBs 3502 and 1858 due to the prior enactment of laws covering the same subject matter.
	HB 1858	Rep. Aragonés	Incorporating cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training in the physical education curriculum of public and private secondary schools	
Human Rights	HBs 1303, 1512, 2343, 3217 & 4078	Reps. Relampagos, Alejano, Fortun, Escudero, & Tambunting	Strengthening the Commission on Human Rights (CHR)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zambales), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the five bills and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their position papers on the bills and to participate in the TWG deliberation.</p>

Continuation... Human Rights	HBs 158 & 750	Reps. Belmonte (J) and Aglipay-Villar	Establishing the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture (NCPT), providing a framework for implementing the obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (OPCAT) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to consolidate the two bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Deloso-Montalla.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their position papers on the bills and to participate in the TWG deliberation.</p>
	HBs 222, 714, 732, 1304, 2282 & 2790	Reps. Roque (H.), Belmonte (J.C), Nograles (K.), Relampagos, Villarin & Tambunting	Protecting the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and penalizing the acts of arbitrary internal displacement	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to consolidate the six bills and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Party-List AMIN Rep. Sitti Djalia Turabin-Hataman.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their position papers on the bills and to participate in the TWG deliberation.</p>
Foreign Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 487, 1894, 1922, 1953, 1967, 1995, 2063, 2153, 2191, 2296, 2330, 2340, 2432, 2499, 2682, 2791, 2827, 2970, 3262, 3506, 3669 & 3940	Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Montoro, Salimbangon, Santos-Recto, Suansing (E), Tan (A.), Villar, Pineda, Aragones, Acop, Bertiz, Salceda, Oaminal, Dalipe, Deputy Speaker Abu, Reps. Ferriol-Pascual, Andaya, Ermita-Buhain, Aglipay-Villar, Primicias-Agabas, Tambunting, and Castelo	Amending Section 10 of RA 8239, otherwise known as the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, extending the validity period of the Philippine passport	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica (4<sup>th</sup> District, Bulacan), approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>The proposed law extends the validity period of the regular Philippine passports to a period of five years for minors aged zero to 17, and 10 years for adults 18 years old and above.</p> <p>However, the issuing authority may limit the passport's period of validity to less than 10 years whenever such restriction is necessary to uphold the country's national economic interest or political stability.</p> <p>RA 8239 provides for a five-year validity of the passport regardless of the age of the applicants.</p>
	HR 229	Rep. Bernos	Urging the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to establish a passport issuance office in the Lone District of Abra	The Committee adopted HR 229, and subsequently approved the corresponding Committee Report.
	HR 318	Rep. Castelo	Expressing the collective sense of the House of Representatives to thank the Government of Japan for reaffirming its commitment to support the maritime security of the Philippines	The Committee adopted HR 318, and subsequently approved the corresponding Committee Report.
Overseas Workers Affairs	HBs 78, 457 & 574	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Manalo & Angara-Castillo	Instituting the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mariano Michael Velarde Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills.
	HB 1356	Rep. Nograles (K.)	Instituting policies for the protection and welfare of Filipino seafarers	
	HR 264	Rep. Manalo	Inquiry into the case of the eight Filipino seafarers who were missing after they were commissioned to man and participate in the conduction operation of	The Committee agreed to continue its discussion of issues raised relative to HR 264 in its next meeting.

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs			M/T Rokku Maru from Busan, Republic of Korea to the Philippines	<p>Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), author of HR 264, inquired on the steps being undertaken by concerned government agencies relative to the eight Filipino seafarers who went missing on board M/T Rokku Maru when it was being conducted from South Korea to the Philippines. He noted that no concrete conclusion was arrived at as to who should be held responsible for the unfortunate sea mishap that occurred in January 2016.</p> <p>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Director John Bautista informed the Committee that a series of inter-agency meetings have already been conducted to look into the case. He added that an administrative case has already been filed against Able Maritime Seafarers, Inc. (AMSI), the manning agency which provided the eight seafarers as the crewing complement of M/T Rokku Maru, a tug vessel acquired by Tugsystems Marine Corporation (TMC), during its conduction operations.</p> <p>The POEA was requested to furnish the Committee with pertinent documents relative to the case.</p> <p>During the meeting, two witnesses, Captain Conrado Lozano Jr. and Captain Esmeraldo Tollerva, narrated the events that took place that led to the unfortunate sea mishap.</p> <p>Tollerva, the captain of M/V Kwang Yan who was tasked to bring M/T Rokku Maru from Korea to the Philippines, recounted their journey from the time the two vessels left Korea up to the time they got separated at sea.</p> <p>According to Tollerva, a strong storm caused the towing lines connecting both vessels to be detached, causing them to sail separately. M/V Kwang Yan arrived at the Port of Iligan, Philippines but nothing was heard of from M/T Rokku Maru and any of its crew.</p> <p>On the other hand, Lozano, AMSI's overseas marketing director who hired the eight Filipino seafarers, confirmed his involvement in the under-the-table negotiations to ensure that M/T Rokku Maru will arrive in the Philippines as planned. He admitted that these seafarers were undocumented but insisted that he was only asked to help in the transaction.</p>
Poverty Alleviation	HBs 31, 232, 478, 1122 & 1895	Reps. Del Mar, Marcoleta, Sy-Alvarado, Alejano & Fortuno	Providing for a Magna Carta of the Poor	<p>The Committee, chaired by GABRIELA Party-List Rep. Emmi de Jesus, will continue its deliberations on the five bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Reps. Raul del Mar (1<sup>st</sup> District, Cebu City) and Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP), authors of HBs 31 and 232, respectively, sought the immediate approval of their bills, which were approved on third reading in the previous Congress.</p>

Continuation... Poverty Alleviation				<p>Resource persons from concerned government agencies were asked to present their views on the bills.</p> <p>Dennis Villarta, senior economic development specialist of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), expressed support for the bill, but suggested that the programs and projects contemplated in the proposed law be implemented in accordance with the provisions of RA 8425 or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act.</p> <p>Catherine Diaz, supervising specialist of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), said that TESDA supports the provision on the right to relevant and quality education as it is in line with the mandate of TESDA.</p> <p>National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) Undersecretary Roseller Barinaga and Supervising Counsel Jonathan Reyes of the Office of the Cabinet Secretary both expressed support for the bills. Reyes also advised that in the process of enacting the proposed law, the poor sector should be adequately consulted.</p> <p>On the other hand, Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) Community Development Officer Rafael Antonio Dulce believed that the proposed law's definition of the term "poor" is inadequate which may result in various interpretations.</p> <p>Director for Policy Development and Planning Bureau Rhodora Alday of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) recommended that the bills be studied further. She explained that legislating a uniform system of targeting beneficiaries might not work because the qualifications of beneficiaries vary depending on the nature and scope of programs and projects.</p> <p>The proposed Magna Carta of the Poor aims to provide the poor preferential access to employment opening in private enterprises as well as in government programs and projects; food assistance or subsidy for their survival; access to quality college education; decent housing facilities; and free delivery of health services and medicines, among others.</p>
Rural Development	HBs 2258 & 3953	Reps. Enverga & Kho	Institutionalizing the convergence strategy for sustainable rural development, providing the implementing mechanisms	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Ramos Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Sorsogon), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the two bills.</p> <p>Reps. Anna Katrina Enverga (1<sup>st</sup> District, Quezon) and Elisa "Olga" Kho (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Masbate), authors of HBs 2258 and 3953, respectively, presented the salient features of the bills. Rep. Kho also mentioned that bills with the same subject matter filed in the previous Congress were already thoroughly</p>

Continuation... Rural Development				discussed in a series of meetings and public hearings.  The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers on the bills.
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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Human Rights	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zambales), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.</p> <p>The Committee, which is presently composed of 20 Members, has general jurisdiction over all matters directly and principally relating to the protection and enhancement of human rights; assistance to victims of human rights violations and their families; and prevention of violations of human rights and punishment of perpetrators of such violations.</p>
	Briefing by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR)	<p>CHR Commissioner Karen Gomez-Dumpit briefed the Committee on the organizational structure, legal basis, powers and functions, and issues and concerns of the CHR.</p> <p>Pursuant to Article XIII of the Constitution, Gomez-Dumpit said that the CHR was created to perform various functions, among which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate human rights violations;</li> <li>• Adopt its operational guidelines and rules of procedure; and cite for contempt for violations of these rules;</li> <li>• Provide appropriate legal assistance to victims of human rights and preventive measures against human rights violations;</li> <li>• Exercise visitorial power in places of detention;</li> <li>• Establish continuing human rights promotion programs;</li> <li>• Monitor the government's compliance with international treaty obligations; and</li> <li>• Grant witnesses immunity from prosecution.</li> </ul> <p>The CHR also has additional responsibilities under the following laws: Magna Carta of Women of 2009 (RA 9710); Anti-Enforced Disappearance Law of 2012 (RA 10353); Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013 (RA 10368); Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (RA 9344); Anti-Torture Act of 2009 (RA 9745); and International Humanitarian Law of 2009 (RA 9851).</p> <p>Gomez-Dumpit discussed the three-pronged role of the State in human rights promotion and protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect – the State must refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of human rights;</li> <li>• Protect – the State must prevent private actors or third parties from violating human rights; and</li> <li>• Fulfill – the State must take positive measures, including adopting appropriate legislation, and policies and programs to ensure the realization of human rights.</li> </ul>

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Constitutional Amendments	Presentation by resource persons of their views on proposals to amend the Philippine Constitution	The Committee, chaired by Southern Leyte Rep. Roger "Oging" Mercado, listened to the presentations of the resource persons from the field of law on their views relative to the proposed amendment of

<p>Continuation... Constitutional Amendments</p>		<p>the Constitution.</p> <p>Dr. Wilfredo Villacorta, a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission (ConCom) and former Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), favors amending certain provisions of the Constitution in order to make it responsive to the needs of the current times. He said since 1986 when the present Constitution was crafted, many changes had already occurred that would justify its amendment.</p> <p>Similarly, Professor Emeritus Jose Abueva, chair of the 2005 Consultative Constitutional Commission, strongly supports the amendment of the Constitution, asserting that the framers of the 1987 Constitution merely restored “our old, dysfunctional, corrupt, and obsolete political system.”</p> <p>Abueva endorsed the proposed major reforms in the 1987 Philippine Constitution being advocated by the Centrist Democratic Party: Partido ng Tunay na Demokrasya, a political party accredited by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) in 2012, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abolish all national elections because these are very expensive, corrupting, and dysfunctional;</li> <li>• Change the traditional presidential government, which suffers from constant gridlock, paralyzes, and lack of accountability, to a unicameral parliamentary government;</li> <li>• Create autonomous regions and local governments to which political power, authority, and finances shall be devolved; and</li> <li>• Empower the people as sovereign citizens of the Republic.</li> </ul> <p>Justice Manuel Lazaro, chair of the Philippine Constitutional Association (PHILCONSA), interposed no objection to the move to amend the Constitution, which he described as being “confused, too lengthy, and verbose, and designed for a parliamentary form of government.” However, Lazaro opined that if the only purpose is to serve the requirements of the local government units (LGUs) and the autonomous regions, then the Local Government Code can just be amended instead.</p> <p>Representatives from the Institute of Government and Law Reforms of the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center, Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) signified their support to amend the Constitution.</p> <p>Rep. Mercado requested the resource persons to submit to the Committee their respective position papers relative to the proposed amendment of the Constitution.</p>
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SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Subcommittee on Judicial Reforms (Justice)	HBs 1, 16, 513, 3237, 3239, 3240 & 3418	Deputy Speaker Castro, Reps. Biazon, Barbers & Pacquiao	Imposing the death penalty on certain heinous crimes, amending/repealing for the purpose RA 9346, or the law prohibiting the imposition of death penalty in the Philippines, and other related laws	<p>The Subcommittee on Judicial Reforms, chaired by Rep. Vicente “Ching” Veloso (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Leyte), will deliberate further on the seven bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Veloso asked the resource persons to express their views on the matter.</p> <p>Pastor Grepor “Butch” Belgica of the Christian Bishops and Ministers Association of the Philippines expressed support for the bills saying that since time immemorial, the penalty</p>

<p>Continuation... Subcommittee on Judicial Reforms (Justice)</p>				<p>of death has always been an indispensable part and parcel of the justice system of communities, peoples, and nations. He went on to say that imposing death penalty for crimes worthy of death would meet the demands of justice and preserve peace and order.</p> <p>Atty. Al Vitangcol of the <i>Liga ng Eksplosibong Pagbabago</i> (LEP) said that capital punishment should be imposed only for heinous crimes such as treason, murder, kidnapping, plunder, and those related to illegal drugs. He also suggested that the mode of execution should be limited to lethal injection or gas chamber.</p> <p>Carlo Batalla, secretary general of the Citizens Crime Watch (CCW), and Leon Peralta, founding chair of the Anti-Trapo Movement of the Philippines (ATM) concurred with the views of Vitangcol.</p> <p>On the other hand, Fr. Eli Rowdy Lombo, executive director of the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service, does not favor death penalty explaining that there were cases when inmates who already served several years in prison were later proved to be innocent of the crime charged against them. This scenario deprives justice to innocent people who will be sentenced to death.</p> <p>Also opposing the proposed law were representatives from the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), Amnesty International-Philippines, and In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDEFEND). They said that there is an overwhelming proof that death penalty does not deter the commission of crimes. They also stressed the Philippines' international commitment against death penalty being a signatory to the 1989 Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which aims to abolish death penalty in the jurisdiction of the state parties.</p> <p>Likewise, Atty. Emerlynne Gil, senior international legal adviser for Southeast Asia of the International Commission of Jurists, opposes the restoration of the death penalty stressing that it is a violation of a person's right to life. She warned that the reimposition of the death penalty might cause international legal consequences for the Philippines, having signed the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.</p> <p>Rep. Edcel Lagman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Albay) affirmed that when the Philippines ratified the Protocol, the government is duty-bound not to impose the death penalty.</p> <p>The Committee requested the Philippine National Police (PNP) to submit an official report on crime index data from 2000 to present.</p>
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**TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING**

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	HB 588	Rep. Bataoil	Strengthening the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and providing supplemental duties thereof, amending for the purpose RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Pablo Ortega (1<sup>st</sup> District, La Union), discussed the provisions of HB 588.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish forensic laboratories in each PDEA office in every province, and conduct a quarterly evaluation and enrichment program for this office;</li> <li>• To include the Bureau of Immigration (BI), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and local companies operating private parcel and cargo deliveries, among the agencies that the PDEA will coordinate with in monitoring and inspecting air cargo packages, personal belongings of foreign nationals entering the country, and parcels and mails in the central post office;</li> <li>• To insert another paragraph in Section 84 of RA 9165 (Powers and Duties of the PDEA) which mandates the PDEA to closely coordinate with the DICT to instruct anti-illegal drug units on the effective use of digital communications in the conduct of their operations; and</li> <li>• To include a provision in Section 84 stating that the screening and recruitment of PDEA agents shall be done semi-annually to beef up manpower across all anti-drug units in the country.</li> </ul> <p>Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Oriental) asked if PDEA has the sole authority to conduct forensic tests and operate forensic laboratories.</p> <p>Director Gladys Rosales of the PDEA Plans and Operations Service explained that the PNP, NBI and PDEA have their respective forensic laboratories.</p> <p>Deputy Commander for Operations Ross Jonathan Galicia of the NBI Task Force on Illegal Drugs disclosed that there are private forensic laboratories which are also operating in the country. However, he lamented that these laboratories are more vulnerable to fraud or deceit since the owners do not have public accountability as compared to employees of government-run forensic laboratories.</p> <p>Rep. Teves underscored the importance of having forensic laboratories which are</p>

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)				<p>independent from any government agency to provide impartial forensic results to investigators, especially on cases involving people from the government. He then proposed the establishment of independent forensic laboratories, which Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Pangasinan) supported.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to recommend the approval of HB 588 to its Mother Committee.</p>
	HB 1257	Rep. Biazon	Amending certain provisions of RA 9165, by adding certain chemicals and drugs to the list of controlled precursors and dangerous drugs, respectively; penalizing the possession of controlled precursors and essential chemicals as well as laboratory equipment for the illicit manufacture of the said illegal substances; and mandating local government units (LGUs) to undertake local drug and chemical prevention and control programs, among others	<p>The TWG will deliberate further on HB 1257 in its next meeting.</p> <p>On the proposed amendment to Section 8 of RA 9165, which holds the lessor of the property used as clandestine laboratory liable for the payment of the facility's cost of clean-up, Rep. Teves argued that it is not the job of the lessors to check on the activity of their lessees, rather it is the duty of the PDEA to inspect suspicious facilities.</p> <p>Rosales reported that with the 108 shabu laboratories dismantled, no owner of the rented facilities admitted that they have knowledge of their lessees' illegal activities. She said that the proposed amendment would urge the lessors to be mindful of the activities of their lessees. She said that once red flags are discovered, the lessors should report right away to the concerned authorities.</p> <p>PDEA NCR Assistant Regional Director Christian Frivaldo agreed to the statement of Rosales adding that the proposal will also protect the lessors themselves.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy	<p>Briefing by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on various international parliamentary assemblies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas (3rd District, Pangasinan), listened to the presentation of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on the various international parliamentary assemblies, of which the Philippines is a member.</p> <p>Executive Director Raquel Solano of the DFA's Office of United Nations and Other International Organizations explained that the IPU, established in 1889, is the international organization of parliaments which supports the objectives of and works in close cooperation with the United Nations (UN). Its main areas of activity are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative democracy;</li> <li>Human rights and humanitarian law;</li> <li>International peace and security;</li> <li>Women in politics;</li> <li>Sustainable development; and</li> <li>Education, science, and culture.</li> </ul> <p>Director Florida Ann Camille Mayo of the DFA's Office of the ASEAN Affairs gave a brief background of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). This assembly was originally formed on September 2, 1977 as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO), but later became AIPA in 2006.</p>

<p>Continuation... Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)</li> <li>• Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)</li> </ul>	<p>The Philippines will be hosting the 38<sup>th</sup> AIPA General Assembly next year, with Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Davao del Norte) as the incoming President/Chair of AIPA.</p> <p>Mayo also presented the history and aspirations of the ASEAN. She said that the ASEAN was established on August 8, 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. At present, ASEAN has ten member-states: the five founding members; and Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Cambodia.</p> <p>During the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2003, the ASEAN Community, comprised of three pillars: political-security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community, was established. Each pillar has its own blueprint which serves as one of the roadmaps towards the realization of an ASEAN Community.</p> <p>Mayo also discussed the <i>ASEAN Vision 2025: Forging Ahead Together</i>, which was endorsed during the 27<sup>th</sup> Summit last November 2015. It is a forward looking roadmap that articulates ASEAN goals and aspirations to realize further consolidation, integration and stronger cohesiveness as a regional community.</p> <p>The Philippines will be hosting various ASEAN summits, ministerial meetings and other related meetings next year as part of its chairmanship of the ASEAN. Mayo reported that ASEAN 2017 has the theme: “<i>Partnering for Change, Engaging the World</i>,” mirroring President Rodrigo Duterte’s campaign slogan “change is coming.” The event, which will coincide with the ASEAN’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, has six thematic priorities, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People-oriented and people-centered ASEAN;</li> <li>• Peace and stability in the region;</li> <li>• Maritime security and cooperation;</li> <li>• Inclusive, innovation-led growth;</li> <li>• ASEAN’s resiliency; and</li> <li>• ASEAN: A model of regionalism, a global player.</li> </ul> <p>It will be the third time the country will be hosting the regional meet: first was in 1987 in Manila and then in 2007 in Cebu. The ASEAN chairmanship rotates annually, in alphabetical order of the names of the 10 member-states.</p> <p>Roy Ecruela, Special Assistant, Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security and Consular Concerns of the DFA, underscored the importance of inter-parliamentary relations, especially with the advent of the ASEAN Community 2015. He remarked that harmonizing the laws in the ASEAN region is a big challenge, thus it is necessary that legislators in the region engage in more parliamentary interactions.</p> <p>Rep. Arenas requested the DFA to orient the Committee members on the protocol and practices in international parliamentary assemblies, and to provide them a copy of the <i>Handbook on ASEAN Protocol</i>.</p>
<p>Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on their programs, policies, and proposed legislative agenda for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Foreign Affairs – Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (DFA-OUMWA)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mariano Michael Velarde Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY), listened to the briefing conducted by the DFA and the DOLE and its attached agencies on their programs, policies and proposed legislative agenda for the benefit of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).</p> <p>DFA-OUMWA Executive Director Raul Dado discussed the Joint Manual of Operations in Providing Assistance to Migrant Workers and Other Filipinos Overseas. Said manual outlines the roles and responsibilities of agencies and overseas offices in delivering government services to overseas Filipinos, particularly to those who are in distress.</p> <p>Dado also mentioned the various cases involving OFWs in Kuwait and the Middle East which the DFA handled.</p>

<p>Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and its attached agencies</li> </ul>	<p>The DFA was requested to submit to the Committee pertinent documents on the cases it handled.</p> <p>DOLE Assistant Secretary Maria Joji Aragon apprised the Committee of the Department's mission, vision, legal bases, and programs and services for OFWs.</p> <p>Aragon presented the list of Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) which can be found in 36 locations worldwide. The POLOs serve as the overseas operating arm of the DOLE in implementing Philippine policies and programs for the social protection of OFWs and the promotion of their welfare and interests.</p> <p>Aragon discussed DOLE's various programs and services for OFWs, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-employment programs and services;</li> <li>• On-site programs and services implemented by the 36 POLOs; and</li> <li>• Post-overseas employment services.</li> </ul> <p>Aragon also put forward the agency's proposed legislative agenda including the creation of a Department of Overseas Filipino Workers (DOFW) and putting an end to contractualization.</p> <p>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Director Fernando Reyes discussed the functions of the POEA such as the formulation of the minimum employment standards for OFWs; accreditation of employers; processing of documents of OFWs; and handling of adjudication cases against erring employment agencies and workers.</p> <p>Reyes promised to provide the Committee with data on OFWs that were repatriated from 2014 to 2016.</p> <p>Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Administrator Hans Caccad presented the programs and services of OWWA, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Benefits Program, such as disability and dismemberment benefit, and death and burial benefits;</li> <li>• Education and Training Assistance Programs for OFWs and their Dependents;</li> <li>• Workers Welfare Assistance Program, such as on-site and in-country welfare case management ; and</li> <li>• Social Services and Family Welfare Services, which include repatriation and reintegration programs.</li> </ul> <p>The OWWA was requested to submit to the Committee data on OFWs who benefited from the various programs and services offered by the OWWA.</p>
<p>Rural Development</p>	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on their plans and programs on rural development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Ramos Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Sorsogon), listened to the briefing conducted by the Departments on Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Agriculture (DA) on their plans and programs relative to rural economic growth and development.</p> <p>DAR Undersecretary for Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Sylvia Mallari reported that DAR is currently validating the accuracy and the status of the reported 4.72 million hectares of land acquired and distributed to 2.79 million farmer-beneficiaries under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) from 1972 to June 30, 2014. This review, Mallari said, will allow the Department to revise agrarian reform policies and establish corrective measures to address the problems in the implementation of the land reform program.</p> <p>Mallari added that DAR is crafting a policy guideline that will check and monitor the retained landholdings of landowners which are covered by agribusiness venture arrangements to safeguard the tenurial status of over 1.2 million agricultural farmer-lessees.</p>

