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JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Public Expenditures (JCOCPE)	Approval of the Oversight Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, co-presided by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, and Senator Loren Legarda, Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, approved its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress. It agreed to create subcommittees for each House that will conduct separate oversight meetings on or monitoring of matters delegated by the Committee.</p> <p>RA 10924 or the 2017 General Appropriations Act created this congressional oversight committee to ensure the effective implementation of the law.</p>
	Update on the status of utilization of the quick response fund (QRF) for FY 2016 and FY 2017	<p>The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee discussed with concerned government agencies the status of utilization of the quick response fund (QRF) for FY 2016 and FY 2017.</p> <p>Rep. Nograles emphasized the role of the JCOCPE in ensuring that the funds allocated to the agencies of government are utilized effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the Filipino people. He noted the sluggish utilization of the QRF despite the urgent and enormous need for assistance by victims of calamities and natural disasters.</p> <p>The QRF is a built-in budgetary allocation that represents pre-disaster or standby funds for government agencies in order to immediately assist areas stricken by calamities.</p> <p>Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Benjamin Diokno reported that, unlike in prior years where all agencies of government have received QRF allocations, for FY 2017, the DBM has identified specific departments that should be entitled to this fund. These include the Departments of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Defense (DND), and Health (DOH), and the National Electrification Administration (NEA). The DBM also integrated all the agencies' QRF requirements under the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF) so that there can be faster and automatic augmentation of the QRF allocation, Diokno added.</p> <p>For FY 2016, Diokno reported that allotment releases under the QRF to various agencies of government totaled P11.8 billion out of the total QRF allotment of P12.2 billion. There remains a balance of P375 million from the QRF appropriations of the DND, P200 million; Department of Transportation (DOTr), P25 million; and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), P150 million.</p> <p>For 2017, Diokno said that of the total program allotment of P15.75 billion for the NDRRMF, P3.35 billion has been released to specific agencies identified by the DBM to receive the QRF, as follows: DSWD, P1.25 billion; DPWH, P1 billion; DND, P500 million; DOH, P500 million; and NEA, P100 million</p> <p>DSWD Secretary Judy Taguiwalo said that the DSWD assists victims</p>

		<p>of disasters and natural calamities through the provision of food and non-food relief goods immediately after a disaster. However, Taguiwalo explained that the provision of emergency shelter assistance takes some time because the target beneficiaries need to be validated first in accordance with the requirements of the Commission on Audit (COA).</p> <p>DPWH Secretary Mark Villar said that the programs and projects intended for the rehabilitation of infrastructures, including roads and bridges, damaged by typhoons are already in place.</p> <p>Senator Legarda chided the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) for their failure to respond quickly to the needs of victims of disasters and natural calamities slowing down the latter's capability to bounce back and be on their feet again. She recommended the creation of a proactive workforce in the OCD who will work on a 24/7 basis and will be able to take immediate and appropriate action in times of calamities.</p> <p>NDRRMC Executive Director Ricardo Jalad explained that the NDRRMC could not just act immediately on requests for funds because it needs to observe established procedures and require certain documents in compliance with COA rules and regulations.</p> <p>Senator Legarda urged the NDRRMC to shorten the processing of fund requests to at most 14 to 25 days taking into account the urgency of the requirements, in contrast to the current situation wherein requests for funds have remained pending for two to three months already.</p> <p>House Members present in the meeting, particularly those whose districts are always hit by typhoons and other calamities, were dissatisfied with the implementation of the QRF pointing out that their districts have not recovered fully from the aftermath of such disasters because of lack of funds. They said that the QRF's objective for which it was established has not been achieved.</p> <p>Senator Legarda requested the concerned House Members to provide the Joint Committee a copy of their pending fund requests with the OCD.</p> <p>After the discussions, the Joint Committee agreed on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QRF should be released to the requesting agency within three days from the time the calamity hit a certain area; and • The QRF should be exempted from COA rules and regulations such as the liquidation of funds previously released before allowing a subsequent release of funds.
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