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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bases Conversion (Special Committee)	Substitute Bill to HBs 613, 2391, 3685, 3997 & 6379	Reps. Roman, Macapagal-Arroyo, and Calixto-Rubiano	Amending RA 7227, as amended by RA 9400, otherwise known as the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992, [by revising the allocation of the five percent tax on gross income earned by registered business enterprises within the Subic Special Economic Zone (SSEZ) and strengthening the powers of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), among others]	<p>The Committee, chaired by Pasay City Rep. Emi Calixto-Rubiano, will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Malabon City Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval II, who chaired the technical working group (TWG) tasked to study the proposed law, presented the salient features of the bill.</p> <p>One of the contentious issues discussed by the Committee was the proposed change in the allocation of the five percent tax on gross income earned by all registered business enterprises within the SSEZ.</p> <p>The bill proposes that the tax proceeds will be distributed as follows: 1% to the national government; 2% to the SBMA; and 2% to be collected by the SBMA for distribution to the local government units (LGUs) affected by the declaration of and contiguous to the SSEZ. The sharing will be based on population (40%); land and water area that SBMA derives income or may derive income from (40%); and equal sharing (20%).</p> <p>SBMA Chairperson Wilma Eisma explained that out of the 65,000 hectares of land covered by the SSEZ, only 11,000 hectares (30%) is being utilized and administered by SBMA for development purposes while the rest of the lands are protected areas. She said that due to the lack of available lands, many investors are hesitant to put up their business in SBMA.</p> <p>According to Rep. Sandoval, several mayors of Zambales and also the mayor of Olongapo City oppose the proposed new basis for the sharing of the proceeds of the 5% tax on gross income because it will reduce their share. They suggested that the existing basis be retained, which is 50% for land area, 25% for population, and another 25% for equal sharing.</p> <p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), author of HB 613, is open to other proposals on the sharing arrangement of the 5% tax but requested the SBMA to provide a sample computation of such proposals.</p>

Continuation... Bases Conversion (Special Committee)				<p>Meanwhile, some Committee Members expressed concern on the additional qualification standards for SBMA Board of Directors being proposed in the bill.</p> <p>The bill proposes, among others, that the appointees to the Board should be at least a college graduate and that the representative of the LGU to the Board should be a resident and registered voter of the LGU he or she represents.</p> <p>However, Rep. Roman insisted that these additional qualification requirements be retained in the bill.</p> <p>Rep. Sandoval said that the issue should be put to a vote in the Committee's next meeting.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability	HR 1126	Rep. Casilao	Inquiry into the utilization of the tobacco excise tax and determination of the tangible benefits acquired by tobacco farmers of Ilocos Norte	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1126 and on the alleged irregular transactions of the PGIN undertaken in 2012 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel reiterated that the inquiry seeks to determine whether or not the PGIN committed malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance in its past transactions mentioned in the two measures and whether a legislative action is needed to address certain loopholes in RA 7171 (the law promoting the development of the farmers in the Virginia-tobacco producing provinces) and RA 9184 (Government Procurement Reform Act).</p> <p>Rep. Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao (Party-List, ANAKPAWIS), author of HR 1126, asked Commission on Audit (COA) State Auditor Marilyn Llaguno to categorically state COA's official stand on the questionable cash advances made by the PGIN and whether or not PD 1445 (Government Auditing Code of the Philippines) could supersede RA 7171.</p> <p>Llaguno replied that cash advances are allowed only under certain conditions specified in COA Circular 90-331, which prescribes the rules and regulations on the grant, utilization and liquidation of cash advances.</p> <p>According to Rep. Casilao, the large sums disbursed through cash advance by the PGIN do not fall under the conditions set forth in the COA Circular, thus were clear violations of the Circular, to which Llaguno agreed.</p> <p>Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) chided COA for repeatedly failing to reflect in its audit reports the violations committed by the PGIN. Rep. Pimentel echoed the Majority Leader's statements, adding that there seemed to have been a conspiracy</p>
	<i>Motu proprio</i> inquiry		<p>Inquiry into the transactions of the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte (PGIN), particularly on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of portrait bust sculpture and services for the development of Paoay Museum on July 17, 2012; • Materials and installation of precast concrete for Paseo de Paoay on July 18, 2012; • Purchase of medicines and Libspray 211 for distribution to the different municipalities on October 24, 2012; • Purchase of Panlaban 5EC for distribution to the different municipalities on November 23, 2012; and • Purchase of medicines for distribution to the different municipalities on December 11, 2012 	

Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability				<p>between the COA auditors and some officials of PGIN.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat was instructed to prepare a letter to COA Chair Michael Aguinaldo requesting COA to fast-track the conduct of its final audit report on PGIN's transactions, and if possible, submit to the Committee and release to the public the official preliminary results of its investigation before the Committee's next meeting on May 21.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to subpoena Ilocos Norte Governor Imee Marcos and the six officials of PGIN dubbed as "Ilocos Six" for their failure to attend today's hearing.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 5908	Rep. Gonzales (A. D.)	Mandating the integration of the National Building Code of the Philippines as one of the major subjects in the Bachelor of Science courses in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Sanitary Engineering, and Architecture, and its inclusion as a topic in the licensure examinations for these courses	The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair Rep. Manuel Jose "Mannix" Dalipe (2nd District, Zamboanga City), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 5908 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HR 1660	Rep. Espino	Inquiry into the non-implementation by the Board of Regents of the Pangasinan State University (PSU) and/or by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the decision of the Ombudsman to suspend PSU President Dexter Buted and PSU-Binmaley Campus Executive Director Marcelo Gutierrez Jr.	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1660 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan), co-author of HR 1660, underscored the need to find out why the Ombudsman's suspension order against the two PSU officials is not being implemented.</p> <p>In November 2017, the Ombudsman signed a decision suspending Buted and Gutierrez for nine months for oppression, for arbitrarily dismissing and withholding the salary of Ricardo Tapia, a PSU-Binmaley faculty member.</p> <p>Rep. Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO) asked if the supposed transfer of Tapia to another campus, which was the root of Tapia's complaint at the Ombudsman against the two PSU officials, was proper. Buted explained that Tapia's transfer to the PSU Campus in Urdaneta City, also in Pangasinan Province, had the PSU Board of Regents' approval and was based on a Civil Service Commission (CSR) decision.</p> <p>However, Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City) disclosed that the CSC Central Office reversed the ruling of the CSC regional office in favor of Tapia, saying that the latter's reassignment was tantamount to "constructive dismissal."</p> <p>CHED Officer-in-Charge Prospero de Vera III informed the Committee that the PSU Board of Regents had called for three special meetings</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>purposely to discuss the matter, but could not gather a quorum in all these three meetings and hence, could not conduct its business.</p> <p>According to De Vera, a letter was sent to the Office of the Ombudsman to report on the efforts of the PSU and CHED to implement the decision. He said that the secretaries of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and Department of Agriculture (DA) as well as the Office of Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero had been informed that their representatives to the PSU Board of Regents had not been present during the three special meetings called by the Board.</p> <p>Gregorio delos Angeles, acting secretary to the PSU Board of Regents, confirmed the non-attendance of several members of the Board in the said meetings, although, he said, they have notified the Board's Secretariat as to the reason for their absence.</p> <p>The designated representatives of NEDA, DOST, Office of Senator Escudero, and the private sector explained to the Committee the reason for their failure to attend the special meetings of the PSU Board of Regents.</p>
HR 1669	Rep. Elago	Investigation into the implementation of the free tuition policy for the first semester of Academic Year (AY) 2017-2018 with a budget of P8 billion		<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 1669 and 1744.</p> <p>Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN), author of the two resolutions, underscored the need to conduct an investigation into the government's implementation of its free tuition fee policy in view of the fact that tertiary students are still required to pay the tuition fees despite the passage of RA 10931 in 2016.</p>
HR 1744	Rep. Elago	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives for the immediate implementation of free public tertiary education in accordance with the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931) and the refund of all collected tuition and other school fees for the second semester of AY 2017-2018		<p>RA 10931 seeks to promote universal access to quality tertiary education by providing for free tuition and other school fees in state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges, and state-run technical-vocational institutions.</p> <p>When asked about the delay in the issuance of the law's implementing rules and regulations (IRR), De Vera explained that he was not yet appointed OIC of CHED when the IRR was being crafted. Nevertheless, the IRR is almost done and may already be published in national newspapers by this weekend, he added.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Elago if students will get a refund of the tuition fees they paid for the second semester of AY 2017-2018, De Vera replied that there is no budget yet allotted for this purpose. However, he said CHED is willing to meet with the leadership of Congress and the Department of Budget and Management</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>(DBM) to discuss possible ways to make such a refund.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board conducted a briefing on the implementation of RA 10931.</p> <p>De Vera, who also sits as the OIC-Chair of the UniFAST Board, reported that a total of P8.3 billion was allocated for the implementation of RA 10931 for AY 2017-2018. Out of which, P3 billion has already been released to 110 SUCs as reimbursement for the tuition fees that they did not collect from their enrollees. Another P3 billion will be released covering tuition fees for the second semester of AY 2017-2018. The remaining amount, according to De Vera, will be returned to the National Treasury.</p> <p>De Vera said that in line with the pronouncement of President Rodrigo Duterte, poor but deserving students will be given priority in the implementation of the law. He disclosed that there are cases where some SUCs still collect tuition fees from students because the amount reimbursed to them was insufficient.</p>
Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Special Committee)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 92, 6121, 6263 & 6475	Deputy Speaker Sema, Reps. Macapagal-Arroyo & Dimaporo (M.K.), and Speaker Alvarez	Providing for the Basic Law for the Bangsamoro and abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), repealing for the purpose RA 9054, or the law strengthening and expanding the Organic Act for the ARMM, and RA 6734 or the law providing for an Organic Act for the ARMM	The Joint Committee, chaired by Reps. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), Mauyag "Jun" Papandayan Jr. (2nd District, Lanao del Sur), and Ruby Sahali (Tawi-Tawi), for the Committees on Local Government and on Muslim Affairs, and the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, held an executive session to discuss sensitive issues relative to the draft substitute bill.
Metro Manila Development	HRs 451, 788 & 818	Rep. Castelo	Metro Manila's preparedness in the possible occurrence of a strong earthquake a.k.a. the "Big One"	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), approved the Committee Report on HRs 451, 788 and 818.
National Defense and Security	HB 7304	Speaker Alvarez	Establishing the Philippine Marine Corps (PMC), defining its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan), will deliberate further on HB 7304 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Jose "Mannix" Dalipe (2nd District, Zamboanga City), who sponsored HB 7304 in behalf of the author Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte), said that the bill seeks to establish the PMC as a branch of service, distinct, autonomous, but complementary to the Army, Air Force, and Navy but still under the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). At present, the PMC is under the command of the Philippine Navy.</p> <p>PMC Commandant, BGen. Alvin Parreño, expressed support for the bill, explaining the differences between the PMC and Philippine Navy in terms of force development, human resource development, and organizational development, among others.</p>

Continuation... National Defense and Security				<p>Former Senator Rodolfo Biazon, who once served as PMC commandant, emphasized the need to clearly define the functions of the PMC. He went on to say that the PMC and the Philippine Navy should develop training programs, doctrines and tactics, and amphibious culture together even after their separation.</p> <p>On the other hand, Department of National Defense (DND) Undersecretary Ricardo David Jr. expressed concern about the implications of the bill to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), explaining that the counterpart of PMC in the ASEAN member-states are under the Navy.</p> <p>AFP Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, BGen. Isidro Purisima, said that the AFP has created its own technical working group (TWG) to study the bill.</p> <p>Both Reps. Espino and Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO) opined that even if the PMC and the Philippine Navy are separated, their operations should still be intertwined. They also emphasized the need to develop the PMC by allocating the much-needed budget and providing additional manpower and equipment.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon suggested that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) be invited to attend the Committee's next meeting to comment on PMC's budgetary requirement.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.</p>
Veterans Affairs and Welfare	Substitute Bill to HB 270	Rep. Roman	Increasing the monthly pension of senior veterans thereby amending RA 6948, or the law standardizing and upgrading the benefits for military veterans and their dependents, as amended	The Committee, presided by Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 270.
Women and Gender Equality	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 6595	Speaker Alvarez	Recognizing the civil partnership of couples, providing for their rights and obligations	<p>The Committee chaired by Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Herrera-Dy informed the body that a meeting was held on February 26, 2018 among the authors of the bill to discuss and thresh out the contentious issues and to incorporate pertinent amendments introduced by the resource persons.</p> <p>The Committee discussed Sections 1 to 14 of the draft bill in today's meeting.</p> <p>Dinagat Islands Rep. Kaka Bag-ao recommended that the main title of the bill should reflect the existing laws that will be amended as a result of the proposed measure.</p>

<p>Continuation... Women and Gender Equality</p>				<p>The Committee agreed, among others, on the following amendments to the substitute bill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of the term “Authority to Enter into a Civil Partnership” shall be modified to read as: “refers to a document issued by the local civil registrar (LCR) of the city or municipality where each of the contracting parties habitually reside that allows each of the contracting parties, of either the same or opposite sex, to legally enter into a civil partnership” [Section 3 (c)]; • The consent of parents or legal guardians shall be required if either or both of the contracting parties are between the ages of 18 and 21 [Section 5 (a)(1)]; • Sections 8 (Property Regime) and 9 (Civil Partnership Agreement) of the bill will be merged into one section; • Section 10 (Benefits and Protections of Civil Partnership) shall be expanded to include two additional provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (l) Civil partnership couples shall have the authority to give consent to any medical treatment in behalf of a partner under a serious medical condition; and (m) Civil partnership couples shall be allowed equal visitation rights in hospital, rehabilitation centers, and detention facilities. • The provision under Section 12 (Obligations of Civil Partnership Couples) of the bill which states that “infidelity by either of the partners in a civil partnership shall be punishable under this Act” shall be deleted. <p>Anita Baleda, chief of the Policy Development, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Division of the Philippine Commission on Women, raised a question on who shall issue the “Authority to Enter into a Civil Partnership” to a contracting party who is not a Filipino.</p> <p>To respond to the concern raised by Baleda, Rep. Herrera-Dy proposed to include a provision under Sec. 7 of the bill where the issuance of a civil partnership authority and contract shall apply to either of the following: (a) both Filipinos residing in the Philippines; (b) both Filipinos residing abroad; (c) either Filipino is residing in the Philippines or abroad; and (d) one is a Filipino and a foreigner where applicable laws shall apply.</p>
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PUBLIC HEARINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Special Committee)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 92, 6121, 6263 & 6475	Deputy Speaker Sema, Reps. Macapagal-Arroyo, & Dimaporo (M.K.), and Speaker Alvarez	Providing for the Basic Law for the Bangsamoro and abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), repealing for the purpose RA 9054, or the law strengthening and expanding the Organic Act for the ARMM, and RA 6734 or the law providing for an Organic Act for the ARMM	<p>The Joint Committee, chaired by Reps. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), Mauyag "Jun" Papandayan Jr. (2nd District, Lanao del Sur), and Ruby Sahali (Tawi-Tawi), for the Committees on Local Government, Muslim Affairs and the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, respectively, held a series of public hearings in Mindanao to hear the sentiments of the people on the ground regarding the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law.</p> <p>The 5th and final leg of the public hearings was held on March 15 and 16, 2018 at the Mindanao Civic Center (MCC) in Tubod, Lanao del Norte and at the Dimaporo Gymnasium, Mindanao State University (MSU), Marawi City, respectively.</p> <p>Aside from Reps. Papandayan and Sahali, the following House Members attended the public hearings (either in one or in both hearings): Deputy Speaker Bai Sandra Sinsuat Sema (1st District, Maguindanao) and Reps. Nancy Catamco (2nd District, North Cotabato), Ansaruddin Adiong (1st District, Lanao del Sur), Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay), Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan), Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), Abdullah Dimaporo (2nd District, Lanao del Norte), Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), and Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP).</p> <p>Other attendees to the public hearings were officials of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP); local government executives; and other stakeholders.</p>
Science and Technology	HB 1205	Rep. Yu	Upgrading the position of the provincial science and technology officer into the provincial science and technology director in the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and amending RA 6959, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol), held a public hearing at the Dapitan City Hall, Zamboanga del Norte on March 15, 2018 in relation to HBs 1205, 7011 and 7058.</p> <p>During the public hearing, the Committee agreed to consolidate the three bills.</p> <p>Aside from Rep. Aumentado, the other House Members who attended the public hearing were: Reps. Arlene Arcillas (1st District, Laguna), Allen Jesse Mangaoang (Kalinga), Seth Frederick Jalosjos (1st District, Zamboanga del Norte), and Divina Grace Yu (1st District, Zamboanga del Sur).</p>
	HB 7011	Rep. Aumentado	Converting the provincial science and technology center into provincial science and technology office in every province and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7058	Rep. Marquez	Strengthening the provincial science and technology centers of the DOST, amending RA 6959, appropriating funds therefor	

COMMITTEE MEETINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Cooperatives Development	Discussion with concerned parties on the status of the recommendations contained in the Committee Report on HR 120	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rico Geron (Party-List, AGAP), discussed with the parties concerned the status of the Committee's recommendations as stated in Committee Report No. 611 on HR 120, which was adopted by the Committee on October 10, 2017.</p> <p>HR 120, authored by Rep. Anthony Bravo, PhD. (Party-List, COOP NATCCO), inquires into the alleged violations in the contracts between oil palm plantation cooperatives in Southern Palawan and Agumil Phils., Inc. (AGPI), which put cooperatives in huge debts and displaced farmers from their own lands.</p> <p>Land Bank of the Philippines Vice President Lucila Tesorero reported that the LBP has already conducted a series of consultations with AGPI and the representatives from the 13 cooperatives involved to explore the best options that would be beneficial for both parties. LBP will be presenting its final proposal to the cooperatives and the AGPI by May 2018.</p> <p>Rep. Geron underscored the need to expedite the creation of the task force in anticipation of the LBP's presentation of its proposal this May.</p> <p>Based on the Committee Report on HR 120, one of the Committee's recommendations to address the conflict between the oil palm plantation cooperatives and the AGPI is for the Office of the Governor of Palawan to create a technical task force which shall prepare a rehabilitation plan for the cooperatives. The task force will include as members the representatives from AGPI, the cooperatives, LBP, Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), and the local government units (LGUs) of Palawan, among others.</p> <p>Palawan's Provincial Board Member Albert Rama promised to relay to the Palawan Governor the creation of the said task force.</p> <p>On another recommendation which urges the LBP to condone the loans contracted by the cooperatives or farmer-members, Tesorero said the bank will study the matter and will include in its proposal the best loan payment option it can offer.</p>
Metro Manila Development	Discussion on the proliferation of unregulated medical and dental clinics as well as diagnostic centers in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), will continue its discussion on the proliferation of unregulated medical, dental and diagnostic clinics in another meeting upon receipt of pertinent documents required from the concerned agencies.</p> <p>Dr. Teresita Castillo of QualiMed Health Network said that at present, there is no organization or body that regulates the amount of fees being charged by diagnostic centers. But in terms of licensing, there are several regulatory bodies that govern these diagnostic facilities, Castillo added.</p> <p>QualiMed is a network of healthcare facilities that operates mall-based multi-specialty clinics, stand-alone ambulatory or day surgery centers, and full-service hospitals.</p> <p>Director Nicolas Lutero III of the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau, Department of Health (HFSRB-DOH), confirmed the statement of Castillo on the absence of any regulation on the cost of services offered by diagnostic centers, except for clinics accredited to administer the physical examination of departing overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) the rates of which are set at a maximum of P2,200 per patient.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo inquired on the action taken by the DOH against the continued operation of unlicensed clinics in Metro Manila and whether the Department exercises quasi-judicial functions to summon violators.</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>		<p>Lutero replied that the DOH has no quasi-judicial powers but may issue a cease and desist order against a medical laboratory or establishment that has been found operating without a valid license.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Executive Director Carlos da Silva of the Association of Health Maintenance Organization of the Philippines, Inc. disclosed that there are currently 29 health maintenance organizations (HMOs) in the Philippines which may have thousands of affiliated hospitals, clinics, laboratories and diagnostic centers. Da Silva added that before these hospitals and laboratory clinics are accredited by the HMOs, they have to submit several documents which include the license to operate, business permit, PhilHealth certification, and pharmacy license.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. Francisco Datol Jr. (Party-List, Senior Citizen) reminded the operators of diagnostic laboratories and other medical facilities to strictly adhere to the provisions of RA 9994, or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, particularly in granting 20% discount to senior citizens.</p> <p>The Committee requested the DOH to submit its updated guidelines in the operation of diagnostic and laboratory clinics and a list of diagnostic laboratories that have been issued with a cease and desist order.</p>
	<p>Discussion on the spate of accidents involving public utility vehicles (PUVs) recently occurring in Metro Manila</p>	<p>The Committee will continue its discussion on the causes of accidents involving public utility vehicles (PUVs) in Metro Manila in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo recalled the Committee's investigation in November last year prompted by a serious vehicular accident along San Mateo-Batasan Road in Quezon City on October 26, 2017, when a 22-wheeler trailer truck plowed through several vehicles causing the death of five persons and injuries to 14 others.</p> <p>During the said investigation, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and Land Transportation Office (LTO) promised to expedite the bidding of the motor vehicle inspection system (MVIS) and the utilization of mobile speed enforcement systems for the purpose of effectively evaluating the roadworthiness of vehicles.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo expressed his disappointment over the failure of the DOTr and LTO to fulfill their commitments to this day.</p> <p>DOTr Assistant Secretary Mark de Leon said that one MVIS is stationed at East Avenue, Quezon City and another at the Parañaque City airport road. De Leon admitted that more MVIS units need to be procured for deployment to strategic areas.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City) on the most common causes of vehicular accidents, the resource persons from the DOTr and LTO said that these are brake failure, loose tires, defective maneuvering control, poor road condition, and driver's error.</p> <p>The LGU representatives present during the meeting committed to adopt and issue a joint memorandum circular imposing speed limits on various roads in Metro Manila.</p>

IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Justice	Approval of the Committee Report and the Resolution setting forth the Articles of Impeachment against Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), approved the Committee Report and the House Resolution setting forth the Articles of Impeachment against the Chief Justice, by a vote of 33 in favor and 1 against.

Continuation... Justice		<p>The impeachment complaint filed by Atty. Lorenzo Gadon and endorsed by 25 House Members, listed four grounds for impeachment against the Chief Justice: culpable violation of the Constitution; betrayal of public trust; corruption; and other high crimes. These grounds have a total of 27 alleged impeachable acts committed by Sereno.</p> <p>With the approval of the Committee Report and the Resolution, the next phase will be the deliberations in the plenary. Based on the House's Rules of Procedure in Impeachment Proceedings, "A vote of at least one-third (1/3) of all the Members of the House is necessary for the approval of the resolution setting forth the Articles of Impeachment. If the resolution is approved by the required vote, it shall then be endorsed to the Senate."</p> <p>Upon receipt of the verified complaint/resolution of impeachment, the Senate convenes as an impeachment court where the Chief Justice will stand trial.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Mindanao Affairs	Briefing by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on their plans and programs for Mindanao	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), listened to the briefing conducted by the DAR and DTI on their plans and programs for Mindanao.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Rodriguez mentioned the following government agencies which, according to him, allotted only a very small percentage of their budget for Mindanao for FY 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Transportation (DoTr) – 1.1%; • Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) – 1.86%; • Department of Tourism (DOT) – 3%; • Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) – 3.02%; • Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – 10.36%; • Department of Health – 10.42%; • Department of Science and Technology (DOST) – 11.36%; and • Department of Agriculture (DA) – 17.36%. <p>Rep. Rodriguez said the technical working group (TWG), created by the Committee to study ways by which the budget allocation for Mindanao can be augmented, will conduct a series of meetings in April 2018 together with concerned government agencies.</p> <p>DAR Undersecretary Rosalina Bistoyong discussed several foreign-assisted projects of DAR intended for Mindanao, one of which is the Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development (MinSAAD) project funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Bistoyong claims that most of DAR's projects for 2018 are focused on Mindanao.</p> <p>MinSAAD, an integrated, area-based approach to rural and agriculture development, aims to increase agricultural productivity, product value, and income of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and other small-scale farmers through the provision of infrastructure and agricultural support systems.</p> <p>DTI Budget Division Chief Wilma Macalalag presented the DTI's locally-funded projects in Mindanao. Macalalag said that of the P2.2 billion budget for 2018 for DTI's regional offices, 32% was allotted for Mindanao. She added that 213 of the 789 <i>negosyo</i> centers established throughout the country can be found in Mindanao.</p>

<p>Continuation... Mindanao Affairs</p>		<p>DTI's Bureau of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development OIC-Assistant Director Alice Opeña added that more than 50% of the budget for the Shared Service Facilities (SSF) Program for FY 2018 was allocated for Mindanao. The SSF program aims to improve the quality of products and services of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and make them more competitive through the provision of machinery, equipment, tools, systems, skills and knowledge under a shared system for free.</p> <p>DTI Regional Operations Group Director Emma Asusano informed the Committee that the DTI launched in 2017 the "Strike Team Program" for indigenous peoples (IPs) and micro entrepreneurs (MEs) to help the 30% of the country's poorest provinces, including those in Mindanao, gain increased access to services pertaining to business development and enhancement, market promotion, and capability building.</p> <p>Rep. Rodriguez asked how the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) arrives at the budget ceiling for a particular year. DBM Budget and Management Bureau (BMB)-A OIC-Assistant Director Ma. Grace delos Santos explained that, instead of a budget ceiling, the annual budget of an agency is now determined based on its absorptive capacity or budget utilization for the previous year.</p> <p>Bistoyong, however, pointed out that the reason why government agencies, such as DAR, could not fully utilize their funds in a given year is the tedious and lengthy procurement process.</p> <p>Rep. Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1st District, Misamis Oriental) sought the support of the district representatives from Mindanao for the House resolution filed by the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development, which he chairs, urging an increase in the budget for DTI's <i>Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-aseño</i> (P3) Program from P1 billion in 2018 to P6 billion in 2019, for the <i>Kapatid</i> Mentor ME Program from P150 million to P300 million, and for the Shared Service Facilities Program, the proposed budget of which is still being discussed with the DBM.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to file a resolution requesting the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC) to open provincial offices in Mindanao. The SBGFC is a government corporate body created by virtue of RA 6977, as amended, or the Magna Carta for Small Enterprises, which is mandated to make available various alternative modes of financing and credit delivery systems for SMEs.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat was directed to prepare a "strongly-worded letter" addressed to the DILG, DA, DPWH, Department of Education (DepEd), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) compelling the attendance of their respective Secretaries or Undersecretaries in the Committee's next meeting. The heads of these agencies failed to attend today's meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were asked to submit the documents and reports requested by the Members of the Committee.</p>
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