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BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 7054 & SB 1461	Rep. Uybarreta and Senator Gatchalian	Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund Act	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, Chair of the House Committee on Energy, and Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy, reconciled the disagreeing provisions of HB 7054 and SB 1461.</p> <p>Other conferees present during the bicameral conference committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Reps. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE), Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL), Rogelio Neil Pepito Roque (4th District, Bukidnon), Michael Romero, Ph.D. (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), and Orestes Salon (Party-List, AGRI); on the part of the Senate, Senators Maria Lourdes Nancy Binay and Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	Substitute Bill to HBs 4750 & 7221	Reps. Alejano and Yu	Regulating the registration, licensure, and practice of occupational therapy, providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5 th District, Batangas), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 4750 and 7221 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 3808	Rep. Gasataya	Establishing a Professional Regulation Commission's (PRC) office in the City of Bacolod and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 3808.
	HB 3952	Rep. Barbers	Prohibiting the display or advertisement of government officials' names and photos in all government projects, services, and vehicles	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 3952 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera (Party-List, ABS) agreed to the proposal penalizing such government officials who use public funds to further their political ambitions.</p> <p>All other lawmakers present during the meeting expressed support for the passage of the bill.</p>

Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation	HB 2320	Rep. Chipeco	Regulating the practice of microbiology in the Philippines	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune the bill.</p> <p>San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes will act as the TWG Chair.</p> <p>One major issue raised by several resource persons during the meeting was the overlapping of functions between the microbiology and the medical technology professions.</p>
Ecology	<i>Motu proprio</i> Investigation		Investigation on the environmental condition of Philippine coastal areas with beach resorts and other developments in Region IV-B and Region VII	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on environmental problems in coastal areas in Regions IV-B and VII.</p> <p>Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) OIC-Regional Director Maria Socorro Abu of Region IV-B reported that notices of violation will be issued to establishments found not complying with the different environmental laws in Bacuit Bay in El Nido, Palawan. A special task force was also created to implement the rehabilitation and development of Bacuit Bay and to resolve environmental issues and concerns.</p> <p>Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez apprised the Committee that Boracay Island and some business establishments will temporarily be closed for 60 days starting June 2018. Rep. Marquez said the purpose of the closure is to clean the whole island and close down non-complying establishments. The clean-up period may entail losses for businesses but it will be for the benefit of the island in the long run, Rep. Marquez added.</p> <p>Rep. Marquez said the problem lies in Boracay's central sewerage treatment facility the design of which can accommodate wastes from hotels with an aggregate capacity of only 5,000 rooms. But, an estimated 16,500 rooms now exist in Boracay, Marquez added.</p> <p>Abu reported that out of 303 business establishments in Boracay, only 192 have an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte) inquired on DENR's courses of actions for the non-compliant establishments. The EMB said that after due process and the establishments have not yet instituted corrective measures to comply with the laws, their case will be endorsed to the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) for the imposition of penalty and issuance of a cease and desist order (CDO).</p> <p>On the issue of local government units (LGUs) still granting building permits to</p>

Continuation... Ecology				<p>establishments with no ECCs, DENR Undersecretary Maria Paz Luna said the Department has no authority over LGUs. However, such cases are referred to the Office of the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Meanwhile, EMB Region VII Regional Director William Cuñado reported on the present environmental concerns in Panglao Island which include: the absence of septage and sewerage treatment facilities in the island; encroachment of some resort facilities into the easement zones; and no proper treatment of sewage by motorized boats and other watercraft.</p> <p>Cuñado mentioned that out of the 344 establishments in Bohol, only eight have valid permits and operational sewage treatment facilities.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing asked if DENR can immediately cancel the ECCs of non-complying establishments. Luna replied that other measures under the Clean Water Act can be applied against erring establishments prior to the cancellation of the ECC.</p> <p>The DENR was requested to submit the following documents to the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Region IV-B, inventory of swamp areas in Boracay and list of resorts occupying such areas and the appropriate action of the DENR on the matter. • For Region VII, list of industrial establishments located upstream, a comprehensive report on the solid waste disposal in Bohol, and a timeline on addressing waste management issues in the region.
Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 3858	Rep. Geron	Reenacting the provisions of RA 9003, otherwise known as the Social Security Condonation Law, with a new period of availment of the program	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), approved HB 3858.
	HB 6349	Speaker Alvarez	Creating the Siargao Development Authority, prescribing its powers, functions and duties providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 6349.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco Jose "Bingo" Matugas II (1st District, Surigao del Sur), co-author of HB 6349, said that the bill aims to develop Siargao in the province of Surigao del Norte as a major tourist destination not only in the Philippines but also in Asia. The creation of the Siargao Development Authority, he said, will ensure the full implementation of the development masterplan for Siargao.</p> <p>The Department of Finance (DOF) expressed reservation on the bill citing the government's efforts to rightsize the bureaucracy. The bill creates another government office, the functions of which may overlap with existing government agencies, the DOF said.</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 6862	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Creating the Cagayan de Oro River Basin Development Authority, defining its powers and functions and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6862 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Matugas sponsored HB 6862 in behalf of the author, Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City).</p> <p>Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Project Manager Gil Turalde said the Department is still studying the bill and will submit its position paper in the Committee's next meeting.</p>
Government Enterprises and Privatization jt. w/ Legislative Franchises and Transportation	Substitute Bill to HBs 6593, 1103, 1265, 1911, 5458, 6837 & 6959	Speaker Alvarez, Reps. Castelo, Biazon, Violago, Alejano, Rodriguez (M.), and Sy-Alvarado	Restructuring the Philippine national railway system, creating for the purpose the Philippine National Railway Authority, Luzon Railway Corporation, Visayas Railway Corporation, and Mindanao Railway Corporation, and appropriating funds therefor	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan), and Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar) of the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Legislative Franchises, and Transportation, respectively, approved the Substitute Bill to the seven bills subject to style and amendment.
Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity	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, will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Land Management Bureau (LMB) Director Emelyne Talabis suggested that land titles should be issued administratively and not by a judge. Thus, Talabis proposed the creation of a single agency in charge with land titling and registration in the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR).</p> <p>As to the equal sharing of revenue from the utilization or exploration of natural resources between the national government and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region Government (BARG), Assistant Secretary Gerardo Erquiza of the Department of Energy (DOE) said that it is feasible. However, in the case of the power industry, Erquiza maintained that the national government should have exclusive power to regulate power generation, transmission and distribution.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Atty. Leah Enriquez of the Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court (SC), pointed out that the qualification standards for the judges of the Shari'ah courts as provided for in the draft substitute bill are "lower" than the qualification standards for the judges of the regional trial courts, the metropolitan trial courts or the municipal trial courts, in terms of the required number of years in the practice of the Shari'ah Law.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity</p>				<p>In response, Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) Commissioner Maisara Dandamun-Latiph emphasized that the creation of the Shari'ah Academy would eventually raise the qualifications of judges as the academy provides additional extensive courses on Shari'ah and Fiqh, civil, commercial and criminal law, and trainings in the practice of the Shari'ah Law.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo (2nd District, Lanao del Norte) reiterated that the proposed inclusion of the municipalities in Lanao del Norte and barangays in the province of North Cotabato, "without the approval by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite in the political units directly affected" is incongruent to Section 10, Article X of the Philippine Constitution.</p> <p>Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte) reminded the BTC and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) of their commitment to submit to the Joint Committee the certified true copy of the result of the 2001 plebiscite which ratified RA 9054.</p> <p>The following government agencies will be invited to attend in the next meeting of the Committee: Land Transportation Office (LTO), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).</p>
<p>Natural Resources jt. w/ Legislative Franchises</p>	<p>Consolidated Bill on HBs 6259, 5674, 2165, 2915 & 3229</p>	<p>Speaker Alvarez, Reps. Cuaresma, Amante, Paduano, and Matugas</p>	<p>Requiring a legislative franchise for mining operations and providing incentives to minerals processing, amending RA 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List, LPGMA), Chair of the Committee on Natural Resources, and Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4th District, Isabela) of the Committee on Legislative Franchises, approved the consolidated bill.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco Jose "Bingo" Matugas II (1st District, Surigao del Norte), Chair of the technical working group (TWG) that studied the five bills, presented to the Committee the salient features of the consolidated bill.</p>
<p>National Defense and Security</p>	<p>HR 1589</p>	<p>Rep. Suarez</p>	<p>Investigation into the relief of Navy Flag Officer in Command (FOIC) Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado over the P16 billion frigate deal</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan), discussed the issues raised in HRs 1589 and 1590.</p>
	<p>HR 1590</p>	<p>Rep. Alejano</p>	<p>Investigation into the alleged anomalies in the Philippine Navy Frigate Acquisition Project (FAP) to determine if it complies with RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act in order to strengthen and/or amend our procurement laws and processes, encourage our procurement officers to get the best in the market, and ensure that our national interest prevails over personal and business interest</p>	<p>At the outset, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon), author of HR 1589 and MAGDALO Party-List Rep. Gary Alejano, author of HR 1590, both expressed their support for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Modernization Program, particularly the Frigate Acquisition Project (FAP). However, they lamented that personal interests apparently prevailed over national interest in the controversial frigate deal.</p>

Continuation...
National
Defense and
Security

In line with the AFP Modernization Program, the Philippine Navy initiated the FAP as early as 2013 in order to boost its external defense capabilities. The two frigates that the Philippine Navy wants to procure are at par with modern warships of other countries. In 2016, the Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) of South Korea won the bidding for the procurement of these frigates.

In his explanatory note, Rep. Alejano alleged that the HHI found means to circumvent the contract with the Philippine Navy to use inferior products or systems that do not comply with the technical requirements of the latter. He said the two parties disagreed over the specification for the Combat Management System (CMS) that will be installed in the frigates. CMS is considered as the "brain" of the ship integrating all the different systems on board the frigate.

Former Philippine Navy FOIC Ronald Joseph Mercado preferred the use of the Thales Technology of Netherlands, while the HHI insisted on using the Hanwha Systems Naval Shield.

However, the new Philippine Navy FOIC Robert Empedrad explained that both CMS meet the technical requirements of the Philippine Navy. He also informed the Committee that the Hanwha CMS is the same CMS being used in some of South Korea's own frigates.

Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana blamed Mercado for the delays in the acquisition of the frigates. According to Lorenzana, Mercado usurped his authority, and ignored and disobeyed his orders by threatening to cancel the contract with HHI and insisting on the use of the Thales Tacticos CMS.

Mercado denied Lorenzana's accusation, asserting that he never disobeyed a lawful order from his superior. Mercado claimed that he was merely strictly enforcing the letter of the contract.

The Committee Members questioned why the HHI was given the sole authority to choose the CMS to be used. Lorenzana and Empedrad cited RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act which prevented them from specifying the brand of CMS to be used for the frigates. Under the law, they were only allowed to give technical specifications of the frigates, which they did, and left the choice of CMS to HHI.

Several Committee Members agreed that RA 9184 should be amended to allow the country to procure equipment that would adequately modernize the AFP.

Continuation... National Defense and Security				Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City) said that despite the delays, he found comfort in the fact that the CMS that the HHI installed in the frigates is the same one being used by South Korea, a country whose security is undeniably in constant threat. On the other hand, he expressed his disapproval of Mercado's relief and believed that there were more "humane" ways to deal with the situation.
Overseas Workers Affairs	HB 7124	Rep. Pacquiao	Mandating the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to publish, disseminate, and update a handbook on the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers, amending for the purpose Republic Act 8042, otherwise known as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995," as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), approved HB 7124 subject to amendment.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) expressed their support for the proposed law.</p>
	HR 625	Rep. De Jesus	Inquiry into and assessment of the efforts of the Philippine government to respond to the needs of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) affected by the crisis in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the aim to develop appropriate measures to assist OFWs in distress in the Middle East	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 625 in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Emmi de Jesus (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HR 625, asked for updates on the efforts being undertaken by concerned government agencies to assist the OFWs affected by the crisis in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).</p> <p>The KSA has been experiencing economic difficulties in recent years due to the decline in oil prices in the international market and the unstable peace and order situation in the Middle East. The crisis affected businesses in the Kingdom which led to retrenchments of OFWs and delayed or non-payment of wages and benefits to some.</p> <p>OWWA Administrator Hans Cacdac explained that OWWA has released nearly P1 billion to assist around 20,000 affected OFWs and their families, including repatriated workers and those who are still at their jobsites.</p> <p>Cacdac also informed the Committee of the existing loan program of OWWA in partnership with the Lank Bank of the Philippines (LBP) which offers a loanable amount of P100,000 to P2 million at 7.5% interest rate. However, only few OFWs have availed themselves of the program due to the collateral requirement.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite representatives from the LBP and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to shed light on the issues and concerns raised by the Committee Members.</p>

Transportation	HB 7103	Rep. Villafuerte	Creating a Class D district office of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in the Municipality of Pamplona, Camarines Sur	The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, approved HB 7103.
	HBs 7155, 7182 & 7195	Reps. Enverga, Calderon, and Olivarez	Establishing extension offices of the LTO in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the three bills.
	HB 7220	Deputy Speaker Hernandez	Converting the LTO Licensing Center in the City of Koronadal, Province of South Cotabato into a regular licensing center to be known as LTO Licensing Center of Koronadal City and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 7220.
	HBs 4719 & 6061	Reps. Sarmiento (E.) and Mercado	Converting the satellite offices of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in Calbayog City, Province of Samar and in Maasin City, Province of Southern Leyte into extension offices and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HBs 4719 and 6061.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 5085	Rep. Baguilat	Regulating the establishment and implementation of agribusiness ventures arrangements (AVAs) in agrarian reform lands	<p>The technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Ifugao Rep. Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. and Rep. Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao (Party-List ANAKPAWIS), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Baguilat, author of HB 5085, underscored the need to strengthen the regulation and operation of AVAs to ensure that the rights and interests of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) are protected. The bill also seeks to maximize the use of the distributed lands without compromising the tenurial rights of the ARBs.</p> <p>Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Undersecretary Luis Meinard Pañgulayan apprised the TWG that the existing administrative order (DAR AO 09-06) on the rules and regulations governing AVAs in agrarian reform areas had been revised and will be submitted to the DAR Secretary for appropriate action. Pañgulayan also clarified that the AVA should be seen as a temporary arrangement to improve the economic status of farmer beneficiaries.</p> <p>Agribusiness Venture Arrangement (AVA) refers to entrepreneurial collaboration between ARBs and investors to implement an agribusiness venture involving lands distributed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) (Source: DAR AO 09-06).</p>

Continuation... Agrarian Reform (Technical Working Group)				<p>Rep. Casilao emphasized that the resolution of issues concerning control and ownership of lands should always be in favor of the ARBs and that it should be subject to mandatory arbitration by the DAR. Such mechanism should be incorporated in the proposed law and synchronized with the recently revised AO on AVAs, Casilao said.</p> <p>Similarly, Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN) stressed the need to protect and safeguard the rights and interests of the ARBs who are most of times on the losing end of an AVA.</p> <p>In the next meeting, industry players in the agribusiness sector will be invited to provide comments on the bill.</p>
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Transportation (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 6978, 190, 1725, 2731, 3116, 5042 & 5480	Majority Leader Fariñas, Reps. Bravo (A.), Biazon, Alejano, Villafuerte, Deputy Speaker Garcia, and Rep. Vargas	Establishing the Philippine Transportation Safety Board and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), co- presided by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), for the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), Vice Chair of the Committee on Transportation, will deliberate further on the draft Substitute Bill to the seven bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The joint TWG reviewed Sections 4-10 of the draft substitute bill and agreed on several points, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the proposed National Transportation Safety Board will be changed to Philippine Transportation Safety Board (PTSB); and • The PTSB shall be an independent body not attached to the Office of the President. <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill for consideration by the TWG.</p>
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HBs 3655, 3832, 4011, 4133 & 7105	Rep. Romero, Minority Leader Suarez, Rep. Limkaichong, Deputy Speaker Singson, and Speaker Alvarez	Granting tax amnesty on all unpaid internal revenue tax liabilities	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), will deliberate further on the six bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>All resource persons present during the meeting support the intent of the bills, with some of them presenting their respective recommendations.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Mark Dennis Joven suggested to make assets as the basis for the computation of the amnesty tax to facilitate the implementation of the proposed law.</p> <p>On the other hand, SGV & Co. Tax Department Head Luis Ferrer recommended the incremental net worth instead of assets or total net worth be made as the tax base, as the latter option would be unfair to those who are compliant in declaring their annual assets, liabilities, and net worth.</p>
	HB 4412	Rep. Gatchalian	Enhancing revenue administration and collection by granting an amnesty on all accrued penalties and charges of businesses which ceased to operate without clearance from the national government	

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)				<p>Under the bills, the proposed tax base for the computation of amnesty tax is the net worth.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Reps. Antonio Tinio (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) and Jocelyn Limkaichong (1st District, Negros Oriental) conveyed that the provisions in some of the bills on "Integrated Information Management Program" and "Interconnectivity" might be deemed as "riders" to the proposed law.</p> <p>A "rider" is a provision added to a bill having little connection with the subject matter of the bill.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit to the TWG their respective position papers, including specific recommendations on the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tax base to be used in the computation of the amnesty tax (net worth, assets, incremental net worth, or incremental assets); • The period to be covered by the amnesty bill; and • Provisions in the bills that could be perceived as rider provisions.
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on its plans and programs for North Luzon	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the briefing conducted by the DOLE on its plans and programs which are also applicable to North Luzon.</p> <p>Director Adeline de Castro of DOLE's Planning Services presented the Department's various programs which result in the following outcomes: ensure the employability of workers and enhance the competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); ensure the protection of workers' rights and maintenance of industrial peace; and strengthen social protection for vulnerable workers.</p> <p>De Castro highlighted DOLE's employment facilitation programs which aim to assist poor but deserving students, out-of-school youth, and the vulnerable youth find a job to improve their lot. The DOLE also helps college graduates and professionals find the right job and improve their skills, competence and productivity.</p> <p>People from North Luzon may visit DOLE's Public Employment Service Offices (PESO) in various localities in North Luzon for employment facilitation services, De Castro added.</p> <p>For the protection of workers' rights, DOLE implements programs that speed up the disposition of labor cases, ensure the speedy settlement of labor disputes through a 30-day mandatory conciliation-mediation services, and ensure employers' compliance with labor standards.</p> <p>De Castro also discussed DOLE's programs promoting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) by providing on-site training, custodial and case management, as well as reintegration services for returning OFWs.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>Expressing the sentiment of the Committee Members, Baguio City Rep. Mark Go advised DOLE to inform the district representatives of the programs being implemented by the Department in their respective areas of jurisdiction.</p> <p>The Committee also requested DOLE to submit a report on the status of implementation of its programs per region as well as the guidelines for the implementation of these programs.</p>
<p>Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<p>Discussion on the bilateral labor agreements between the Philippines and countries of destination of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), will continue its discussion on the bilateral labor agreements between the Philippines and countries of destination of OFWs in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Manalo said the Committee intends to study the imposition of deployment bans by the Philippine government to certain countries due to cases of maltreatment and abuse of OFWs. He stressed that pursuant to RA 10022 (the law amending the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995), OFWs can only be deployed in countries where the rights of Filipino migrant workers are protected.</p> <p>DFA Assistant Secretary Grace Princesa said that the DFA is providing the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) a list of countries that are "partially compliant" with Philippine labor laws to guide the POEA in the deployment of Filipino workers in certain countries. She explained that there are countries which assure protection of laborers but not domestic workers, thus the need for bilateral negotiations.</p> <p>Rep. Manalo chided DFA and POEA for deploying workers to countries which are only partially compliant with labor laws and should be held liable for that.</p> <p>OIC Director Felixberta Romero of the POEA Pre-Employment Services Office explained that pursuant to a communication from the DFA dated May 24, 2012, countries certified by DFA as partially compliant shall be considered as compliant without prejudice to negotiations for the protection of household service workers. Under this qualification, POEA may continue the deployment to partially compliant countries and DFA will continue to negotiate for a better protection of household service workers.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Cacdac apprised the Committee that a General Bilateral Agreement on labor cooperation between the Philippines and Kuwait was signed during the state visit of Kuwait's Emir Saba Al-Ahmad AlJaber Al-Sabah in the Philippines in 2012.</p> <p>Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) asked why Kuwait is still in the list of countries that are partially compliant when a bilateral agreement was already forged between Kuwait and the Philippines.</p> <p>Labor Undersecretary Jacinto Paras clarified that the bilateral agreement Cacdac was pertaining to was only a Memorandum-of-Understanding (MOU).</p> <p>The Committee directed the resource persons to submit pertinent data as requested by the Members as well as their position papers on the issues raised.</p>
<p>Southern Tagalog Development (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on their plans and programs for Region IV-A (CALABARZON) for the period 2018-2019:</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Isidro Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Rizal), listened to the briefing conducted by some bureaus and attached agencies of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) on their plans and programs for Region IV-A (CALABARZON) for the period 2018-2019.</p>

<p>Continuation... Southern Tagalog Development (Special Committee)</p>	<p>agriculture as a top producer of table eggs, 2nd top producer of broiler chicken and hogs, and 4th top producer of beef cattle in the country. He also highlighted the 2016-2017 positive growth rate in the production of the following crops: palay, coconut, sugarcane, banana, and pineapple.</p> <p>For the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), BFAR Region IV-A's Regional Fisheries Training and Fishfolk Coordination Division Chief Maribeth Ramos discussed the following priority programs for 2018-2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK)</i> – one of the banner programs of the Duterte administration to sustainably manage the coastal and marine resources of the country; • <i>Balik Sigla sa Ilog at Lawa (BASIL)</i> – a five-year program (2018-2022) that applies scientific approach to explore the natural productivity of lakes and reservoirs; • <i>Fishyalan</i> – an innovative approach to promote environmental protection and sustainable management of fisheries; • <i>F/B Pagbabago</i> – a livelihood intervention to reduce poverty and generate economic transformation in the fishery sector; and • Post-Harvest and Marketing – aims to uplift the fisheries post-harvest sector and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through the reduction of post-harvest losses. <p>Ramos also discussed the Bureau's priority interventions to achieve its 2018-2019 targets for five priority commodities, namely, tilapia, milkfish, seaweeds, shrimps and shellfish.</p> <p>Other services extended by BFAR to Region IV-A include the provision of integrated coastal and marine fisheries resources rehabilitation and development, livelihood and training seminars, and legal and advisory services, Ramos added.</p>
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