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FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Science and Technology	Forum on the Philippine regulatory system for genetically modified crops	<p>The Committee, in partnership with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture - Biotechnology Information Center (SEARCA-BIC), conducted a forum entitled "Philippine Regulatory System for Genetically Modified Crops" on February 27, 2019 at the South Wing Annex Building, House of Representatives.</p> <p>Delivering the welcome message on behalf of the Committee Chair, Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol), Committee Secretary Amado Caballero said that today's forum aims to familiarize the stakeholders with the country's policies on biotechnology and recent biotechnology trends, and provide factual and science-based information pertaining to the environmental and food safety of biotech products.</p> <p>Resource speakers from the Departments of Science and Technology (DOST), Agriculture (DA), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Health (DOH), and the Interior and Local Government (DILG) explained the Philippine regulatory system for genetically modified plants and plant products and the respective roles of their offices in this area.</p> <p>The existing regulatory mechanism on biotech crops is embodied in Joint Department Circular (JDC) No. 1, series of 2016, issued by the DOST, DA, DENR, DOH, and DILG, entitled: "Rules and Regulations for the Research and Development, Handling and Use, Transboundary Movement, Release into the Environment, and Management of Genetically-Modified Plant and Plant Products Derived from the Use of Modern Biotechnology."</p> <p>DOST National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines technical staff Reimond Corona explained that the JDC has set new guidelines for processing and approval of applications for the use, field-testing, importation, and commercial propagation of genetically modified plants and plant products. Under this circular, apart from the DA and DOST, the DENR, DOH, and DILG are now involved in the regulatory process to ensure proper assessment of environmental and health risks and public participation in decisions involving biotechnology.</p> <p>Corona also said that the Philippines is the first country in Asia that is able to establish a biosafety regulation system for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) which is compliant with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>According to Co-Vice Chair Geronima Eusebio of the Biotech Technical Advisory Group under the DA's Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI), only crops that are herbicide tolerant and insect resistant have so far been approved for commercial propagation. She also mentioned that the BT (<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>) Talong and BT Cotton had completed their field trials while the Golden Rice (infused with Vitamin A) is awaiting the approval of its application for field trial.</p>