



# Committee Daily Bulletin

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Second Regular Session

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HB 7333	Rep. Fernando	Institutionalizing a new Filipino gesture of goodwill, praise and respect	<p>The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved HB 7333 with amendment.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to amend Section 1 of the bill to reflect the new short title of the proposed law as "Bating Filipino Pangkalusugan Gesture," instead of the original "Bating Filipino."</p>
	HB 2666	Rep. Chatto	Establishing a Balilihan Congressional Library in the Municipality of Balilihan, Province of Bohol and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 2666 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Chatto (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bohol), author of HB 2666, manifested that his explanatory note attached to his bill be entered into the records as his sponsorship speech.</p>
	HB 3189	Rep. Chatto	Separating the High School Department of San Roque Integrated School in Barangay San Roque, Municipality of Balilihan, Province of Bohol, converting it into an independent national high school to be known as the San Roque National High School, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 3189 subject to compliance with the documentary requirements set by the Department of Education (DepEd).</p> <p>Rep. Chatto, author of HB 3189, manifested that his explanatory note attached to his bill be entered into the records as his sponsorship speech.</p>
	HBs 2075 & 2732	Reps. Sy-Alvarado and Rodriguez	Recruiting, hiring, and training additional school-based guidance counselors, psychologists, school social workers, and mental health personnel	<p>The Committee will continue its deliberations on HBs 2075 and 2732 upon the submission by the DepEd and the Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association, Inc. (PGCA) of their proposed amendments to the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 2732, said that with the growing number of mental health cases among Filipino schoolchildren, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary that schools employ personnel who have the expertise to respond to the students' mental health concerns. Toward this end, Rep. Rodriguez said that he filed his bill to mandate the hiring of additional school-based guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, and mental health experts in every public elementary and secondary school.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Romulo pointed out that schools are having difficulty hiring additional mental health professionals because of the limitation imposed under RA 9258 or the Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004. The law mandates that no person shall engage in the practice of guidance and counseling</p>

<p>Continuation... Basic Education and Culture</p>				<p>without a master's degree and a license. Another reason is the unattractive pay scale for guidance counselors in the government sector with an entry salary grade (SG) level of only SG 11 and can only go as high as SG 13.</p> <p>DepEd Undersecretary Jesus Lorenzo Mateo said that the DepEd has already brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Budget and Management and the Civil Service Commission by proposing that the SG of guidance counselors be upgraded to SG 16. However, what is being discussed now is the possibility of upgrading it to SG 13 only.</p> <p>Mateo added that aside from the low salary, the problem also lies on the lack of duly registered guidance counselor practitioners. He disclosed that there are currently 5,398 authorized positions for guidance counselors, but only 1,096 are filled up.</p> <p>To mitigate the problem, Mateo said the DepEd instructed its field offices to designate teachers as officers-in-charge of guidance counseling activities. Likewise, in preparation for the school opening, the DepEd has been conducting mental health webinars participated in by DepEd employees, faculty members, parents, and learners.</p> <p>PGCA Public Relations Officer Francis Ray Subong noted that the Philippines' qualification requirements for the practice of guidance counseling is patterned after the United States. Subong suggested reclassifying the position of guidance counselor under the current setup to "guidance services specialists" with an entry level of SG 16.</p>
	<p>HR 259</p>	<p>Rep. Vergara</p>	<p>Inquiry into the alleged mass migration of private school teachers to public schools on account of higher compensation with the end in view of enacting legislative measures to address the same</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 259 in another meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) noted that while RA 11466, or the Salary Standardization Law of 2019, has increased the monthly salary received by public school teachers, the teachers' salary subsidy (TSS), which is the only government assistance program available to private school teachers, has no significant impact on the financial need of private school teachers.</p> <p>Under RA 8545 or the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act, the DepEd shall grant a salary subsidy to teachers in participating private secondary schools.</p> <p>Rep. Vergara said that the huge difference between the salaries and other benefits received by private and public school teachers has resulted in the migration of many private school teachers to public schools where the</p>

<p>Continuation... Basic Education and Culture</p>				<p>compensation and benefits are much better. Thus, she said many private schools were forced to downsize, while some had to close outright, much to the detriment of the students and the education system as a whole.</p> <p>Mateo confirmed that even prior to the pandemic, the DepEd was already aware of the migration of private school teachers. He confirmed that the disparity in compensation between the public and private school teachers is getting bigger, which is the main reason why the DepEd increased the TSS to P24,000 from P18,000 per year.</p> <p>However, Mateo said that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, P274 million of the DepEd's budget allocation under the 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA) was realigned to the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. Thus, he said the TSS was not implemented this year. Nonetheless, the DepEd hopes that the TSS funds will be restored in the 2021 budget.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go clarified that under Section 14 of the RA 8545, the total monthly salary including the subsidy to be received by private high school teachers shall not exceed 80% of the salary of their counterpart in the public school. Additionally, Rep. Go noted that availment of such is not automatic as the private junior high school has to first apply and comply with the requirements of DepEd for participating in the program before their teachers can qualify for the TSS.</p> <p>Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) Managing Director Joseph Noel Estrada informed the Committee that there are about 51,000 beneficiaries of the TSS nationwide as the program only caters to teachers in private secondary schools. He, however, disclosed that majority of the schools that closed down were private elementary schools. Hence, he suggested that the TSS be extended also to teachers in the private elementary schools.</p>
<p><b>Disaster Resilience</b></p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 3418, 3543 &amp; 3922</p>	<p>Rep. Adiong, Deputy Speaker Hataman, and Rep. Balindong</p>	<p>Providing monetary compensation to qualified claimants, through the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), for the loss or destruction of residential and commercial properties as a result of the 2017 armed conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and terrorist groups in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, and appropriating funds therefor</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4<sup>th</sup> District, Leyte), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 3418, 3543 and 3922.</p> <p>The Committee Report will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.</p>
	<p>HR 377</p>	<p>Rep. Torres-Gomez</p>	<p>Inquiry into the utilization of all disbursed funds and status of the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of Marawi City</p>	<p>The Committee will continue its inquiry into the issues raised relative to the three measures in its next meeting. Rep. Mohammad Khalid Dimaporo (1<sup>st</sup> District, Lanao del Norte), presided over the deliberations on the three measures on the request of the Chair.</p>
	<p>HR 470</p>	<p>Deputy Speaker Hataman</p>	<p>Inquiry into the present state of Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and</p>	

Continuation... Disaster Resilience			Recovery Program as mandated by Administrative Order 03, as amended, creating an inter-agency task force for the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the City of Marawi and other affected localities	At the outset, National Housing Authority (NHA) General Manager Marcelino Escalada Jr. said that the NHA is tasked to provide the transitory and permanent shelters of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Marawi City. He added that the NHA is a member of the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM).
	Privilege Speech	Deputy Speaker Hataman	Marawi Siege Three Years After	<p>NHA Region IX Manager and Marawi Project Management Office Head Roderick Ibañez reported that a budget of P1.26 billion was appropriated for the construction of 4,852 units of transitory shelters. Of this target, a total of 2,859 units have been completed thus far.</p> <p>For the permanent shelters, a budget of P1.48 billion was appropriated with a target of 3,500 units. Ibañez reported that only P256.5 million has been released to date.</p> <p>With regard to NHA's clearing operation and debris management project, he informed the body that the project was completed in February. As for the road infrastructure project for most affected areas (MAA) with a cost of P2.37 billion, he said that the project just started last month as this involved a number of road installations such as drainage, sewerage, water supply, electrical and internet systems.</p> <p>Ibañez also reported that the NHA has been providing free technical assistance in architectural and engineering designs for MAA IDPs who intend to build their own houses.</p> <p>Rep. Torres-Gomez inquired why there are only a small number of transitory and permanent shelter units to be constructed considering that there are supposedly 78,000 IDPs.</p> <p>TFBM Chairperson and Human Settlements and Urban Development Secretary Eduardo del Rosario explained that 78,000 was a bloated figure that was initially collected at the height of the siege. He said that they were able to record a more accurate figure based on TFBM's new master list from Kathanon, a biometrics-based profiling of IDPs in Marawi City, as of April 15, 2019.</p> <p>From 78,000, a total of 37,479 displaced families have been profiled from the 24 barangays in MAA and 72 barangays in non-MAA. Out of the 37,479 displaced families, 15,727 are from the MAA and 21,752 are from outside the MAA.</p> <p>He emphasized that the IDPs who do not have a land or house on their own and those living in danger zones are the ones that are given priority to occupy the transitory and permanent shelters. About 3,000 families from the MAA are in need of house and lot grant, according to Del Rosario.</p>

Continuation... Disaster Resilience				<p>On the query of Deputy Speaker Mujiv Hataman (Basilan) on who are qualified to occupy the permanent shelters, Del Rosario said that the 3,000 families are the ones that are qualified.</p> <p>Rep. Yasser Alonto Balindong (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Lanao del Sur) asked if the P2.37 billion budget for the road infrastructure project in the MAA would be enough. Escalada answered in the affirmative.</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN) inquired if livelihood assistance could be extended to the affected Marawi traders.</p> <p>Del Rosario said that the government has already provided financial assistance to the traders through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). However, he said that the traders still need to secure permits from the local government units (LGUs) in order to occupy stalls in the newly constructed market in the area.</p> <p>Rep. Ansaruddin Abdul Malik Adiong (1<sup>st</sup> District, Lanao del Sur) said that the traders who were previously given permits in the market should be given priority by the LGUs.</p> <p>When asked if it is possible to finish all rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in Marawi City by December 31, Del Rosario answered in the affirmative.</p> <p>Rep. Dimaporo directed the Secretariat to send a letter to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to request it to submit information on the status of land titling in Marawi City, and to the local government of Marawi City to submit information on the protocols for selecting recipients of permanent shelters.</p> <p>He also directed the Secretariat to invite Marawi City Mayor Majul Gandamra in the next Committee meeting.</p> <p>The body approved the motion to conduct a quarterly meeting with the TFBM and concerned agencies for regular updates on the programs and projects for Marawi City rehabilitation.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their presentations and reports as well as other pertinent documents that were requested of them by the Members.</p>
<b>Government Enterprises and Privatization jt. w/ Local Government</b>	HB 11	Rep. Del Mar	Creating the Mega Cebu Development Authority, prescribing its functions and duties, and providing funds therefor	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Eric Olivarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Parañaque City), Chair of the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Rep. Noel Villanueva (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Tarlac), Chair of the Committee on Local Government, approved HB 11.

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization jt. w/ Local Government				Rep. Raul del Mar (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Cebu City), author of HB 11, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill be entered into the records as his sponsorship speech.
	HB 201	Rep. Garcia (J.E.)	Creating the Metro Bataan Development Authority (MBDA), defining its powers and functions, providing funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee approved HB 201 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bataan), author of HB 201, said that the MBDA is an existing body but its creation was only by virtue of a provincial ordinance issued in 2012. MBDA's current functions include consolidating policies and coordinating programs, projects, and services with province-wide impact that transcend local political boundaries and will entail huge expenditures if provided by the individual local government units (LGUs).</p> <p>Rep. Garcia noted that eight years since the creation of the MBDA through a local ordinance, the development agenda of the Province of Bataan still cannot be fully attained. Hence the need to create the MBDA by law which will be attached to the Office of the President.</p> <p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bataan) manifested that she had reservations on the bill as it might undermine the autonomy of the LGUs in Bataan. She likewise said that the functions of the proposed MBDA may overlap with those of the Metro Bataan Development Council (MBDC) – the policymaking body of the MBDA. Nevertheless, she proposed amendments to the bill to address these issues, to which Rep. Garcia agreed.</p>
	HB 432	Rep. Rodriguez	Creating the Metro Cagayan de Misamis Development Authority, defining its powers and functions, providing funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee approved HB 432 subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 432, cited the importance of creating metropolitan special political subdivisions that will coordinate the services and plan the best development of the localities that have the potential of becoming a metro area. He said that bills seeking to create a Metro Cagayan de Misamis Development Authority were also filed and deliberated on in previous Congresses.</p>
HB 7181	Rep. Ungab	Creating the Metropolitan Davao Development Authority, defining its powers and functions and providing funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee approved HB 7181 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Isidro Ungab (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Davao City) agreed to the suggestions of Reps. Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Davao de Oro), Joel Mayo Almario (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Davao Oriental), and Lorna Bautista-Bandigan (Davao Occidental) to include in the coverage of the bill some of the municipalities in their respective provinces.</p>	

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Trade and Industry (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 749, 1185, 2779, 2902, 4536 & 6420	Rep. Limkaichong, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Rodriguez and Castelo, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Estrella	Revised Consumer Act of the Philippines	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Vice Chair Rep. Braeden John Biron (4<sup>th</sup> District, Iloilo), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to adopt the recommendation submitted by Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bataan) to amend Article 99 (Labeling Requirements of Cigarettes) of the proposed Revised Consumer Act and align it with RA 10643 or the Graphic Health Warnings Law, which mandates and specifies the labeling requirements for tobacco products.</p> <p>Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Ruth Castelo presented the recommendations submitted by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on the proposed amendments to the Consumer Act of the Philippines, among which are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt the definition of "health products" under RA 9711 or the FDA Act of 2009;</li> <li>• Align the provision on labeling of drugs with the Generics Act of 1988 (RA 6675), the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (RA 3720), and the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008 (RA 9502);</li> <li>• Align the provision on "Special Packaging of Consumer Products for the Protection of Children" with the Toy and Game Safety Labeling Act of 2013 (RA 10620);</li> <li>• Impose higher penalties on misleading advertisements of milk code products;</li> <li>• Delete the provision under Art. 126 (Injunctive Relief) and replace with the issuance of a "cease and desist order" by concerned implementing agency for violation of Articles 110 to 115 of this Act.</li> </ul>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Cooperatives Development	<p>Briefing on the economic stimulus programs under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2 by the following government agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), listened to the briefing of concerned government agencies and financial institutions on the economic stimulus programs for cooperatives under the Bayanihan 2.</p> <p>DBP Senior Vice President Paul Lazaro informed the body that the Bayanihan 2 stimulus fund will be used primarily for lending to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives, agro-fisheries sector, and the transport sector. The following are the DBP's lending</p>

<p>Continuation... Cooperatives Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)</li>   <li>• Small Business Corporation (SB Corp)</li>   <li>• Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)</li> </ul>	<p>programs for the cooperatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded Rice Credit Assistance under Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF) - a credit facility which aims to help increase the productivity of farmers and their cooperatives;</li> <li>• Program Assistance to Support Alternative Driving Approaches (PASADA) - provides funding for the acquisition of brand new, energy efficient public transport vehicles to replace old jeepneys and includes support facilities for the operation and maintenance of public utility vehicles (PUVs); and</li> <li>• Financing Utilities for Sustainable Energy Development (FUSED) - provides financing support to initiatives that would enhance access to electricity services.</li> </ul> <p>On the request of Rep. Canama for DBP to impose a lower interest rate and service fees for its loan programs, Lazaro said that he will look into the matter once the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Bayanihan 2 is released.</p> <p>LBP Assistant Vice President Edgardo Luzano also assured the body that the LBP will look into the possible lowering of interest rates for its lending programs for cooperatives after the issuance of the IRR of the Bayanihan 2.</p> <p>Luzano also mentioned LBP's programs for the cooperative sector which include the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) Lending Program, Socialized Credit Program under the Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SCP-SIDA), Expanded Assistance to Restore and Install Sustainable Enterprises for Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Small Farm Holders (ARISE-ARBS-SFHs), and the Expanded Survival and Recovery Assistance Program for Rice Farmers (SURE Aid).</p> <p>SB Corp Head of Planning and Advocacy Group Frank Lloyd Gonzaga apprised the body of the status of implementation of the COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES) Program. The CARES Program is a P1 billion Enterprise Rehabilitation Financing Facility under the Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3) Program to help micro and small enterprises stabilize or recover from losses due to quarantine measures implemented amidst the pandemic.</p> <p>Under the CARES Program, micro enterprises with asset size of not more than P3 million may avail themselves of loans ranging from P10,000 to P200,000 while small enterprises with an asset size of more than P3 million to P15 million may take out loans of up to a maximum of P500,000.</p> <p>Gonzaga reported that out of the 13,745 loan applications that were approved by the SB Corp, 4,963 loans have been released as of September 2 amounting to P327 million.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Adriano Ebcas (Party-List, AKO PADAYON) on the number of cooperatives that have availed of the CARES Program, Gonzaga replied that 342 cooperatives did so far.</p> <p>BSP Managing Director Pia Bernadette Roman-Tayag said that under the Bayanihan 2, BSP's relief measures will include the following: liquidity support, financial relief, operational relief, and access to financial services.</p> <p>She also reported that under the Bayanihan 2, BSP-supervised financial institutions shall implement mitigating measures for loans such as: one-time 60-day grace period for loans falling due on or before December 31, 2020; staggered payment of loans until December 31, 2020 or as may be agreed upon by the parties; non-</p>
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<p>Continuation... Cooperatives Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)</li> </ul>	<p>imposition of interests, penalties, fees or other charges (during the 60-day grace period); and exemption from the payment of documentary stamp tax for loan term extensions and restructuring.</p> <p>The BSP will also provide regulatory relief for its supervised institutions that agree to loan term extensions or restructuring.</p> <p>On the part of the CDA, Executive Director Ray Elevazo conveyed that CDA is able to assist cooperatives affected by the pandemic particularly in securing loans through its strong partnership with the DBP, LBP, BSP, SB Corp, and the Department of Agriculture (DA). He added that CDA also has an existing partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in providing scholarship grants to the children of cooperative members. Webinars are also being conducted by the CDA such as on helping MSMEs transform their business digitally.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Henry Oaminal (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Misamis Occidental) proposed to CDA to decentralize its operations for a more efficient delivery of services. He noted that CDA regional offices still have to refer even minor inquiries of cooperatives to the central office.</p> <p>Elevazo said that the concern of the Deputy Speaker will be raised and taken up in the next CDA Board meeting.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p><b>Climate Change</b></p>	<p>Discussion on the status of the Philippine energy transition and future-proofing of the energy market amid the COVID-19 crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC)</li> <li>Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Chatto (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bohol), discussed with concerned government agencies and non-government organizations the status of the Philippine energy transition and future-proofing of the energy market amidst the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Chatto underscored that any development or advancement in the energy sector should be sustainable and does not contribute to global warming.</p> <p>ICSC Energy Transition Advisor Alberto Dalusung III noted that even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, annual and monthly prices of electricity continue to rise which is attributed to the low power reserve situation in the country. Before the middle of March, both power demand and prices in the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) were considerably high.</p> <p>However, Dalusung said, a sudden drop in the electrical load and consumption was recorded in the middle of March when the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) was declared. This caused energy prices to fall, averaging to almost P2.00 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) up to the middle of April. Demand for power recovered starting from the middle of May which also caused the prices to increase.</p> <p>He presented a graph showing variations in the level of electrical load that occurs in a day. According to Dalusung, even in a single hour, there are huge variations especially at the peak hour of 2 p.m. where the load can reach a high of 11,000 megawatts (MW) and go down to around 6,000 MW. He said that the prices are highly dependent on the ability of power plants to balance the supply and demand of power at every hour of the day. Thus, he emphasized the need for more flexible power plants that do not react quickly to changes in electricity demand to spare the consumers from the adverse effects of volatile prices.</p> <p>The ICSC is a Philippine-based international non-government group advancing fair climate policy and low carbon, climate-resilient development.</p>

Continuation...  
Climate Change

- Climate Change Commission (CCC)

IEEFA Analyst Sara Jane Ahmed said that neither the financial sector nor the power sector is affected by the risks of volatile prices as these are just being passed on to the end-users. She highlighted Meralco's removal of automatic pass-through and carve-out clause which should be observed or become a standard in future power contracts as this means that power companies and investors would be the ones to bear the risk of volatility and uncompetitiveness.

Ahmed also discussed the financial risk involved in pursuing coal or fossil fuel projects and the need to transition to clean and sustainable energy economy. She said that over 130 globally significant financial institutions are beginning to exit coal finance which include several top banks in Singapore. In the Philippines, the Ayala Corporation has already finalized its decision to exit coal finance by 2025.

IEEFA examines issues related to energy markets, trends, and policies. Its mission is to accelerate the transition to a diverse, sustainable and profitable energy economy.

CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera said that the CCC fully supports the initiative of the Department of Energy (DOE) on renewable energy and the plan to reduce the country's dependence on coal.

The CCC recognizes that the energy sector has consistently accounted for a significant percentage of the country's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and as such, should reduce its GHG emissions by 70% as committed by the country under the Paris Agreement.

According to Herrera, renewable energy can provide a major share in the power generation mix in the Philippines in a stable and reliable manner and at the same time increase energy self-sufficiency and reduce supply-related risks. Thus, the renewable energy sector is among the biggest opportunities for investment amid the global shift to a greener energy strategy.

- Department of Energy (DOE)

DOE Undersecretary Felix William Fuentebella pointed out that the Department is pushing for clean and indigenous sources of energy pursuant to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) and the Renewable Energy Act of 2008. He said that the DOE needs to determine which clean and indigenous sources of energy can provide the least cost and offer high reliability.

On the issue of "pass-on charges," Fuentebella said that these should be itemized and fully disclosed in the bids submitted by all those participating in the competitive selection process (CSP), as stated in DOE's Department Circular 2018-02-0003. The Department Circular adopts and prescribes the "policy for the competitive selection process in the procurement by the distribution utilities of a power supply agreement for the captive market."

Fuentebella also said that the DOE is looking forward to its partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in coming up with a basic course for the installation of renewable energy systems.

Rep. Chatto asked the status of compliance of the DOE in coming up with the Philippine Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

When the Philippines ratified the Paris Agreement, the government set forth a country-defined timeline to submit the first NDC before 2020. The NDC embodies the domestic mitigating measures of each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. (Source: CCC website)

<p>Continuation... Climate Change</p>		<p>Fuentebella said that the DOE is still in the process of consolidating the required data to also take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also said that the updated National Renewable Energy Program is still under review and evaluation by the National Renewable Energy Board.</p> <p>Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) inquired on the waste to energy (WTE) initiative of the DOE. Fuentebella explained that this initiative was undertaken to address concerns about finding renewable energy sources and waste management. He said that waste energy is considered under the biomass category which is one of the sources of renewable energy. Thus, this could further augment the country's supply of renewable energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.</p>
<p><b>People's Participation</b></p>	<p>Discussion with representatives from the Russian Embassy on the Philippines-Russian bilateral cooperation in the sphere of education, particularly on the Russian government's scholarship program, and on the status of the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, discussed with the Russian Embassy delegation the Russian government's scholarship programs available to Filipinos and the status of the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Robes thanked the Russian Embassy delegation for their presence in today's meeting. She said that Russia has a long experience in multilateral cooperation, especially those related to humanitarian issues, human rights, and the right to development which are now the priorities of many countries.</p> <p>Tatiana Shlychkova, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the Russian Embassy in Manila, informed the Committee that Russia has a yearly scholarship program for foreigners who would like to study in Russia. She added that by joining the program, the Filipino youth will benefit from the knowledge and expertise in fields that are useful for the country's development.</p> <p>Russian Embassy's Second Secretary Denis Karenin said that the scholarship program being provided by the Russian government includes free tuition, accommodation, and subsistence allowance. A one-year Russian language course will also be provided for free for those who will enroll in courses that are taught in the Russian language.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Shirlyn Bañas-Nogralles (1<sup>st</sup> District, South Cotabato), inquired about the academic requirements that the students must comply to qualify for the scholarship.</p> <p>Karenin replied that since the Russian Embassy could not barely meet the quota set by the Russian government for foreign scholarship, a secondary degree or tertiary degree diploma would already suffice for now. However, if there are more applicants, those who have better grades will be chosen over others. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, applications for the scholarship program will be done online. Shlychkova added that the Russian government would gladly accommodate the applications of Filipino students for the next two to three years as one of its ways of supporting the Philippines.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Pangasinan) expressed her appreciation to the delegation of the Russian Embassy for opening the scholarship program to Filipinos saying that it will greatly help in the country's road to recovery amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>On the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia, Russian Embassy's First Secretary Vladislav Mongush mentioned the three areas of cooperation between his country and the Philippines: conduct of clinical trials; purchase of Russian vaccine (Sputnik V) developed by the leading research institute in Russia, the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology; and the</p>

<p>Continuation... People's Participation</p>		<p>establishment of a local manufacturing plant for the production of the vaccine.</p> <p>Mongush added that last August 19, the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology and the Russian Direct Investment Fund signed a non-disclosure agreement on the exchange of information on COVID-19 vaccine. On August 24, they started exchanging information and documents related to the vaccine, which will be reviewed and analyzed by concerned Philippine authorities. He added that conducting clinical trials is the best way to prove the effectiveness of the vaccine.</p> <p>Rep. Robes asked if the vaccine will be available by October 2021. Mongush said that the availability of Sputnik V in the country depends on the cooperation of both countries. However, in Russia, a mass vaccination for Russia's frontliners (teachers, doctors, and nurses) will start in the middle of September 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Janette Garin (1<sup>st</sup> District, Iloilo), who is a medical doctor by profession, voiced her concern on the plan to put up a vaccine manufacturing plant in the Philippines. She said that "it has been tried several times but unfortunately the water source, especially in Luzon, would not qualify," without elaborating further.</p> <p>Likewise, according to Rep. Garin, the manufacturing plant would require a vast area, which can probably be located in Mindanao or in the Visayas, but this would take time to establish. Hence, Rep. Garin suggested that it would be better for the vaccines to be imported from Russia and duly licensed and recognized by the World Health Organization. This, she said, would be the fastest way for the country to get hold of the vaccines.</p>
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