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COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
People's Participation	Discussion with representatives from the Russian Embassy on the Philippine-Russian bilateral cooperation in the sphere of education, particularly on the Russian government's scholarship program, and with regard to the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia	<p>The Committee, chaired by San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, continued its discussion with the Russian Embassy officials on the Russian government's scholarship programs available to Filipinos and the status of the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia.</p> <p>Rep. Robes thanked Russian Ambassador to the Philippines Igor Khovaev, along with other Russian Embassy personnel, for honoring the invitation of the Committee to a second meeting. Rep. Robes expressed her interest in the latest developments on the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Russia that can help mitigate the spread of the disease and save people's lives. Likewise, she underscored the importance of the vaccine to the Filipino people many of whom lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Ambassador Khovaev stated that Russia is the only country in the world which offers the Philippines not only the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine called Sputnik V, but also the establishment of a local manufacturing facility in the Philippines. This, according to Khovaev, is a unique opportunity that is mutually beneficial to both the Philippines and Russia. He sought the Philippine lawmakers' support in building a long-term partnership between the two countries toward this end. He also mentioned that the Russian government welcomes the conduct of a joint clinical trial with the Philippines.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO), Russian Embassy's First Secretary Vladislav Mongush said that conducting clinical trials is important to prove the efficacy and safety of the Russian vaccine. Mongush added that Russia has already provided the Philippine government all information regarding the vaccine, including the results of the Phases 1 and 2 clinical trials. What the Russian government needs to submit now is a draft clinical trial protocol for conducting Phase III of the joint clinical trial for Sputnik V in the Philippines. He said that the Russian government needs to partner with a reliable clinical research organization in the country to help in coming up with a draft clinical trial protocol in the Philippine context.</p> <p>With regard to the Russian government's scholarship program, Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Shirlyn Bañas-Nogales (1st District, South Cotabato), asked if the program will not push through this school year due to the pandemic. Russian Embassy's Second Secretary Denis Karenin said that the scholarship program will continue although he said that only a few students applied this year. He informed that scholarship applications for the next school year will be accepted by February 2021.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite in its next meeting representatives from the Departments of Health (DOH), Science and Technology (DOST), and Budget and Management (DBM), as well as the Food and Drug Administration and the Russian Embassy to report on the status of the joint clinical trials on Sputnik V.</p>

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