



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

Vol. 3

Monday, January 23, 2017

No. 60

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Mercedes K. Alvarez called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Everybody is requested to rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please remain standing for the Invocation to be delivered by the Hon. Ann K. Hofer from the Second District of Zamboanga Sibugay.

Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

REP. HOFER. Lord God, at the beginning of this session we call to mind the words in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 17, which goes:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Lord, behold, the year itself is new, so help our efforts to be the same—refreshed and renewed by Your Grace.

Guide us in our discussions and decisions, challenging and immense as they now present themselves to be.

Steer us above the din of the crowd so that we can hear what is Your will and Your divine plan for us. Be the strength that empowers us to see the plan through.

Be the presence that inspires us, the wisdom that informs us, so that in the midst of all the divergent

viewpoints, Your light will pierce through the dissonance and clear for us the path to truth, of which St. Augustine wrote, “Where I found truth, there I found my God.” And in finding You, behold, we, too, will become new—refreshed once more to praise and glorify You.

Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move to defer the calling of the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the calling of the roll is deferred.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move for the deferment of the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the approval of the Journal of the previous session is hereby deferred.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we now proceed with the Reference of Business, and may we request that the Secretary General be directed to read the same.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Resolutions on First Reading, Communication and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 688, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF THE LIST OF BENEFICIARIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL INSURANCE PROGRAM (AIP) FOR SUBSISTENCE FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK LISTED IN THE REGISTRY SYSTEM FOR BASIC SECTORS IN AGRICULTURE (RSBSA)”

By Representative Unabia

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Resolution No. 689, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING ON PRESIDENT RODRIGO RODRIGUEZ, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO RECOGNIZE THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO AS AN INDEPENDENT, DEMOCRATIC STATE WITH ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF NATIONS AND WORTHY OF ADMISSION AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS”

By Representatives Roque (H.), Siao and Montoro

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 690, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONVEYING THE SINCEREST SYMPATHIES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF FORMER MANILA ASSEMBLYMAN, MANILA MAYOR, CHAIRMAN OF THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION, & PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CORPORATION (PNOC) CHAIRMAN, GEMILIANO “MEL” C. LOPEZ, JR.”

By Representative Ong (E.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 692, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONVEYING THE SINCEREST CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF FORMER MANILA MAYOR AND MANILA CONGRESSMAN GEMILIANO C. LOPEZ, JR.”

By Representative Chipeco

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 693, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE(S)

TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLANS AND ACTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES, THE PHILIPPINE POSTAL CORPORATION, AND OTHER CONCERNED AGENCIES TO ESTABLISH A BANK FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS”

By Representative Bertiz

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 694, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE(S) TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE CONSPIRACY AMONG WINSTON Q8, MAWARED SERVICES, MEDICAL CLINICS, AND OTHERS TO EXTRACT ILLEGAL AND EXORBITANT MEDICAL TESTING AND CERTIFICATION FEES FROM AMONG OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS BOUND FOR KUWAIT”

By Representative Bertiz

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno for House Bills No. 2319, 2564, 2566, 2567, and 2953;

Rep. Salvador B. Belaro Jr. for House Bills No. 753, 1033, 2550, 3407, and 4698;

Rep. Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D. for House Bills No. 760, 761, and 765;

Rep. Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan for House Bills No. 555 and 1042;

Rep. Gus S. Tambunting for House Bills No. 1521, 1523, 1524, 1525, 1745, and 1999;

Reps. Divina Grace C. Yu, Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III, Edgar R. Erice, and Manuel T. Sagarbarria for House Bill No. 4174;

Rep. Leo Rafael M. Cueva for House Bills No. 4136, 4302, 4342, and 4343;

Rep. Manuel Jose “Mannix” M. Dalipe for House Bills No. 56, 208, 3336, and 3646;

Rep. Micaela S. Violago for House Bills No. 3545, 3857, 3800, and 3856;

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. for House Bills No. 20 and 4113;

Rep. Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano for House Bills No. 223, 225, 256, 304, 426, 489, 918, 696, 697, 698, and 699;

Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. for House Bills No. 1345 and 3968;

Rep. Divina Grace C. Yu for House Bills No. 3708 and 4153;

Rep. Vilma Santos-Recto for House Bills No. 3113, 3234, 3543, 3708, 3709, 4153, 4154, and 4155;

Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas for House Bills No. 53, 349, 539, 541, 542, 3924, and 4063;

Reps. Rodolfo T. Albano III and Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bill No. 4071;

Rep. Rodel M. Batocabe for House Bills No. 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 278, 279, 280, 281, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 378, 379, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 431, 547, 548, 733, 734, 778, and 1648;

Rep. Victoria Isabel G. Noel for House Bill No. 337;

Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, M.D. for House Bills No. 323, 324, 326, 337, 418, 421, and 431;

Reps. Sol Aragon and Vilma Santos-Recto for House Bill No. 3254;

Rep. Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu for House Bill No. 292;

Rep. Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia for House Bill No. 4690; and

Rep. Aniceto “John” D. Bertiz III for House Bill No. 4784.

COMMUNICATION

2015 Annual Report of the Bureau of Internal Revenue
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on People’s Participation (Committee Report No. 54), re H.B. No. 1166, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING INDUSTRY CLUSTER-BASED PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS THROUGH INTER-LOCAL COOPERATION AND PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION”

recommending its approval without amendment, in consolidation with House Bill No. 1615

Sponsors: Representatives Bag-ao, Acosta-Alba, Salon and Lee

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 55), re H.B. No. 42, entitled:

“AN ACT REMOVING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE CONDONATION OF ALL UNPAID TAXES DUE FROM LOCAL WATER DISTRICTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 289-A OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED”

recommending its approval without amendment, in consolidation with House Bill No. 3675

Sponsors: Representatives Cua, Quimbo and Ungab
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our rules, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby opened.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 4:06 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:08 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our rules, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the First District of Bulacan, Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado is recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. SY-ALVARADO

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, sa lahat po ng ating mga kasama dito sa Ika-labimpitong Kongreso ng Pilipinas.

Tulad ng isang tao, ang isang bansa o lahi ay may araw din ng kapanganakan at araw ng kamatayan

na dapat bigyan ng karampatang pagpapahalaga ng kaniyang mga mamamayan sa likwad ng kaniyang kasaysayan. Maraming mga bansa sa daigdig ngayon ang dating sakop ng makapangyarihang mga imperyo ng mga nagdaang panahon.

Ang Pilipinas na isinilang sa mundo ng mga bansa ng Asya at Africa ay nababalot pa ng pusikit na karimlan ng kolonyalismo at ang ating mga katabing lahi ay kasalukuyang nangagugupiling pa sa marawal na piitan ng pagkaalipin. Kakaiba ang paglabas ng bansang Pilipinas sa sangmaliwanag.

Ang mahigit na 300 taon ng pagkaalipin sa kamay ng Kastila ay isang napakahabang teleserye ng pagbangon at pagkaduhagi, ng mga pag-asam at pagkasiphayo, ng paninindigan at pagkabuwal, at pangangarap nang gising at pagkamulat sa katotohanan ng tanikalang nakabalibid sa lugaming katawan ng sambayanan.

Ang mga pangyayaring naganap at nabuo ang sumulat ng ating kasaysayang lumikha ng mga bayani at martir, ng mga mandirigma at paham, ng mga makata at siyentipiko, at ng mga manunulat at artista. Sila ang mga ninunong nagpinta ng ating kultura't kabihasan at nagtustos ng init ng apoy sa maraming pag-aalsang sumiklab sa mga lansangan at nagbigay ng sigabo at inspirasyon sa mga kilusang naghangad, nanghingi at nagsulong ng mga pagbabago sa lipunang Pilipino. Ang bawat kabanata ay isang antas ng pag-unlad mula sa pinagsumundang yugto at ang bawat hakbang ay isang peregrinasyon patungo sa itinadhanang hantungan. Marami mang pagsubok ang naranasan, masalimuot man ang tinahak na daan, mahaba man ang panahong nilakaran, nagpaiba-iba man ang anyo at larangan ng pakikibaka at nagsalit-salitan man ang tagumpay at kabiguan, ang lahat ng sakit, ang hirap ng kalooban at katawan sa paglililihi, pagbubuntis at pagluluwal ng isang bansa ay parang bulang kay daling naparam nang pasinayaan noong ika-23 ng Enero 1899 ang kauna-unahang republika sa buong Asya at Africa, ang Republika ng Pilipinas o Republica Filipina.

Hindi nasansala ng dalawang pinakamakapangyarihang imperyo sa mundo, ang Espanya at Amerika, ang pagsilang ng isang bagong estadong demokratiko at republikano sa panig na ito ng mundo, sapagkat tulad ng sabi ng ating pambansang bayaning si Gat. Jose Rizal sa *El Filibusterismo*:

Kapag ang bunga ng paglililihi ay dumating na sa pagkahinog ay kahabag-habag ang inang magtangkang doo'y sumikil.

Matapos ang isang napakahabang magdamag na pakikibaka at masugid na kilusang propaganda na humantong sa pagsiklab ng isang pambansang pagkamulat at himagsikan sa huling dekada ng ika-19 na daang taon, ganap nang isang bansa o estado ang Republica Filipina noong ika-23 ng Enero 1899.

Binuo ito ng sambayanang Pilipino at mayroon itong soberanya o kalayaan, kasarinlan na ipinahayag sa Kawit, Cavite noong ika-12 ng Hunyo 1898; may sariling pambansang teritoryo na sang-ayon sa itinadadhana ng Konstitusyon ng Malolos; may sariling pamahalaan na binubuo ng tatlong magkakapantay na sangay ng Ehekutibo, Lehislatura at Hudikatura na kinikilala at sinusunod ng nakararaming bilang ng mga mamamayan.

W.J. Gamer defines "State" as "a community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent of external control, and possessing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience."

Base po sa depinisyong ito, ang Republikang idineklara sa Malolos noong Enero 23, 1899 ay nagtataglay ng apat na kahingiang kailangan sa pag-iral ng isang estado: 1) mga mamamayan; 2) ang teritoryo; 3) ang gobyerno; at 4) ang kasarinlan o soberanya. Kung wala kahit isa man lamang sa apat na mahahalagang sangkap na ito, hindi maituturing na ganap na estado ang isang bansa. Subalit ang Pilipinas ay kumpleto sa sangkap, 'ika nga, noong lumitaw sa sangmaliwanag ang Unang Republika ng Asya.

Mula 1896 hanggang 1899 ay nagkaroon ng tatlong republika. Ang Republika ng Kakarong na sa ngayo'y nasa bayan ng Pandi, ang Republika ng Biak-na-Bato sa bayan ng San Miguel na ngayo'y naaboy na sa bayan ng Doña Remedios Trinidad, at ang Republika Filipina sa siyudad ng Malolos na dating kabisera ng Pilipinas. Ang Republika ng Kakarong at Republika ng Biak-na-Bato ay tama lamang tawaging sang-ayon sa ngalan ng lunan o pook kung saan sila sumibol at natatag sapagkat ang kanilang nasasakupan ay hindi naman lumampas sa kasukalan o kabundukang kanilang kinatutunguhan, walang angking soberanya sapagkat nasa ilalim pa noon ang Pilipinas ng kolonyal na kapangyarihan ng Kastila, bagama't may naturingang mga pamunuan na may hangyod o wangs ng isang tumatayong pamahalaan. Hindi naman nasaklaw ng alinman sa kanila, ng Kakarong man o ng Biak-na-Bato, ang kalakhang bilang ng mga mamamayang Pilipino ng panahong yaon, tanging ang mga taong-labas lamang nila Maestrong Sebio at Llanera sa kabundukan ng Silangang Bulacan, ang maliit na pangkat ng Katipunerong galing Cavite na pinamumunuan ni Heneral Aguinaldo, at siyempre pa, ang kolonyal na hukbo ng pamahalaang Kastila ang nakababatid na may umiiral na gobyerno ng mga manghihimagsik sa bulubunduking bahagi ng nasabing lalawigan.

Ayon kay Renato Constantino na isang iginagalang na manunuring pangkasaysayan, ito'y sa dahilang ang ika-23 ng Enero 1899 ay higit sa isang ekspresyon o pagpapahayag ng pagkamakiling ng damdaming-

makabayan para sa kalayaan, sapagkat ang mga taumbayan mismo ay bahagi at kalahok sa pagpapalaya ng kanilang sariling tinubuang-lupa. Ramdam nila na ang republika ay kanilang sariling likha at bunga ng kanilang walang puknat na pakikibaka at pagpapakasakit. Ito ang maituturing nilang premyo at gantimpala kapalit ng kanilang mga pagdurusa ng daan-daang taon.

Nilinaw pa ng mga nabanggit na historyador mula sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas na ang Enero 23, 1899 ay naganap sa paninindigan ng isang buong sambayanang ipinamamalas sa buong mundo, sa salita at sa gawa, ang kanilang paglulunggating mabuhay nang malaya, nang hindi umaasa sa kandili at proteksyon ng ibang dayuhang makapangyarihan.

Nang ipinasiya ng pamahalaang rebolusyonaryo na ilipat ang kabisera ng bansa sa Malolos noong ika-14 ng Setyembre 1898, humugos sa nasabing bayan ang iba't ibang batis ng lipunang Pilipino—ilustrado at mangmang, may lupa at walang lupa, mandirigma at taong simbahan, principales at masa ng sambayanan—na para bagang ibig ipahiwatig na handa na silang proteksiyunan at pag-alayan ng buhay, yaman, dunong at lakas ang binubuong balangkas ng Unang Republika. Noong ika-15 ng Setyembre 1898 ay binuksan sa Simbahan ng Barasoain ang Kongreso Filipina na siyang sumulat at nagpatibay ng isang Saligang Batas para maging gabay ng pamamahala.

Ang mainit na pananabik na sumalubong sa ipinopormang republika ay ipinagbando rin ng mga pahayagang naglabasan sa iba't ibang panig ng kapuluan. Nangunguna sa mga ito ang *La Independencia* at *La Republica Filipina*, gayundin ang *El Heraldo dela Revolucion* at ang *Gaceta de Filipinas*. Ang *La Democracia* ay isa ring pahayagang inilathala ng Kongresong Malolos, bagama't hindi naman nagtagal ang kaniyang pag-iral.

Ang sabik na paghihintay at mainit na paghahanda at pagtanggap sa pinakaaabangang dakilang araw ng pagsilang ng ating Republika ay patunay lamang kung paano pinahahalagahan ng ating mga ninuno ang tagumpay na kanilang pinagsumakitang makamit pagkatapos ng mahabang panahon ng pagtitiis at paghihimagsik. Pinatunayan din nila na kaya nilang isantabi ang magkakasalungat nilang indibidwal at makauring interes kahit sansaglit lamang at maging sa harap ng mas malalakas at higit na nakariribasang mga kaaway, alang-alang sa pagtatamo ng isang makasaysayang sandali. Ang Unang Republika ay walang iniwan sa isang maningning na bulalakaw na mabilis na gumuhit sa pusikit na karimlan ng ating kalangitan. Ang Enero 23, 1899 ay minsan lang na sumingit sa pagitan ng dalawang nagbabanggaang superpower noon sa daigdig. Ang isa ay papalubog na at ang isa pa ay papasikat pa lamang. Nakiraan lamang ito sa mga nagsasalimbayang di na mabilang na petsa ng ating kasaysayan.

Noong ika-30 ng Marso 1899, kinakalampag na ng mga puwersang Amerikano sa ilalim ni Heneral Arthur MacArthur ang pintuan ng Malolos. Ang Unang Republika ay napilitang lumigpit sa San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. Magmula noon, habang umaabante ang naninibasib na hukbong imperyalista ay nagpalipat-lipat ng himpilan sa iba't ibang kabisera ang umaatras na gobyerno ng bagong silang na republika hanggang sa humantong ito sa mapanglaw na baybayin ng Karagatang Pacifico sa Palanan, Isabela.

Habang ginagalugad ng mga Amerikano ang Malolos, ang mga tagapagtanggol ng republika ay magiting na nagharap nang huling pagtatangkang isalba ang kaluwalhatian ng Unang Republica Filipina. Sa mga trintsera ng Sumapa at Catmon ay tuluyang napalugmok ang maraming mandirigmang Pilipino sa mabangis na sagupaang aalalahanin sa kasaysayan bilang labanan sa Catmon.

Sa isang kisapmata, ang kaluwalhatian ng Unang Republica at lahat ng mga maniningning na pangako ng kinabukasang kanyang sinasagisag ay unti-unting kinain ng laho. Sa unang araw pa lamang ng pagtuntong ng mga mananakop na Amerikano sa Malolos, sinimulan na nilang wasakin at burahin sa alaala ng sambayanan ang anumang relikyang nagsisilbing tagapaggunita ng kanilang di-malupig na espiritu ng paghihimagsik. Pati ng mga ilustrado at principales ay isa-isa nilang nilamuyot upang talikdan at kalimutan ang kanilang nakaraan at maging ang kanilang kasaysayan. Ang palalong republika ay muling dumausdos sa kawawang kalagayan ng isang kolonya. Ang matatapang nilang heneral ay yumukod sa mga bagong panginoon. Ang maringal na Kongresong Malolos ay napalitan ng *Asamblea Filipina* at ang Konstitusyong inakda ng kanyang mabunying delegado ay yumukod sa Philippine Bill of 1902 at pagkatapos ay sa Jones Law of 1916. Sa ibabaw ng lahat ng ito, ang bandilang sagisag ng kanyang pambansang dangal ay inagaw sa pamamayagpag sa hangin at mahigpit na ipinagbawal na itanghal.

Ang tanging natira na lamang ay ang aandap-andap na apoy sa dibdib ng masang mandirigma, mga labi at retaso ng lumang Katipunan na paisa-isa ring nalagas sa digmaang gerilyang di nalaunan ay napalitan na ng independence missions na namamalimos ng laya sa lupain ng milk and honey.

May nalalabi pa bang isang angking pambansang dignidad na tinubos ng ating mga bayani mula sa marawal na pagkakayukayok sa pamamagitan ng isang masaganang pagbubuhos ng dugo at maluwalhating resureksyon ng sambayanan sa pagtatapos ng ika-19 na dantaon nang pasinayaan nila ang Unang Republica Filipina?

Sa pagbagsak ng Unang Republica, maging ang dakilang araw ng kanyang pagkakatatag ay unti-unti nang natabunan ng mga alikabok ng nakaraan. Wala

na halos nakakaalala sa ika-23 ng Enero 1899 kung hindi man tuluyan nang nabura ito sa ating pambansang memorya. Ang araw ng pagkakatatag ng Komonwelt, November 15, 1935, hanggang kamakailan lamang ay ginugunita pa ng buong bansa. Ang a-cuatro de Julio, 1946, araw ng pagsasauli sa atin ng Amerika ng inagaw nilang kasarinlan, ay ipinagdiriwang pa natin bilang ating Independence Day hanggang sa ituwid ng dating Pangulong Macapagal ang isang pagkakamaling pangkasaysayan. Kahit nga ang Chinese New Year, isang national holiday sa buong Pilipinas. Minsan po ay natapat ang selebrasyon ng Chinese New Year ng Enero 23, pista opisyal noon sa Bulacan dahil sa inagurasyon ng Unang Republika. Pista opisyal naman sa buong bansa dahil sa Chinese New Year.

Ang Enero 23 ang pinakarurok ng ating mga katagumpayan bilang isang sambayanan. Founding a republic is our highest and greatest accomplishment as a people. Maaari pong may taglay itong mga imperpeksyon, pero hindi maitatwang ito ay isang napakalaking gawa ng ating sariling mga kamay nang walang ayuda o sulsol ng ibang bansa. Ito ay isang republikang tunay na masasabing ating-atin. Ang Unang Republika ang tropeyong gantimpala sa mahaba, pasikut-sikot at madugong paglalakbay ng ating lahi patungo sa kanyang pakikipagtagpo sa sariling tadhana.

Kung minaliit man ito ng mga mananakop at dating kaaway, hindi po ito nakapagtataka. Kung pilit man nilang binubura ito sa ating alaala o gunita, ito ay hindi na nakakabigla. Ang nakakagulat ay kung tayo mismong mga Pilipino ang magbabaon sa libingan ng pagkalimot ng isang pangyayaring naging laman ng panaginip ng ating mga bayani at ninuno dahil lamang sa malamyang palusot na, “marami na tayong piyesta opisyal” at “hindi ito magugustuhan ng business community,” kahit na ito ang pinakamahalagang karanasang pinagdaanan at naganap sa lupaing ito na naging matibay na panulukang-bato o pundasyon ng ating pagkabansa.

Ibalik po natin sa mga pahina ng ating pambansang alaala ang diwa ng Unang Republika. Muli nating italaga ang ika-23 ng Enero sa pambansang dambana ng mga dakilang araw ng kasaysayan sa puso at isipan ng ating magigiting na sambayanan. Kung nagawa ng Kongresong Pilipinas na iluwal ang Unang Republika noong ika-23 ng Enero 1899 para sa lalong ikadadakila ng sambayanang Pilipino, nagawa na rin ito ng mga Mambabatas ng kapulungang ito sa patnubay ng ating Speaker at ng lider ng Ika-labimpitong Kongreso ng Pilipinas na muling irehistro ang kapanganakan ng ating Republica Filipina sa pamamagitan ng pagpasá ng House Bill No. 447, kauna-unahan sa buong Asya at Africa, sa talaang ginto ng ating kasaysayan upang sa bawat taon ay maipaalaala sa ating mga kababayan ang ating pinagmulan, na siyang kasing-kahulugan ng

Enero 23, na kailan pa man ay hindi na mapaparam ni mabubura sa lukbutan ng ating memorya sapagkat sa wakas ay nakatagpo na rin ito ng permanenteng tahanan sa kandungan ng ating pinakamamahal na Inang Bayan.

Maraming salamat po sa lahat ng tumulong magpalaganap ng mas masidhing pagmamahal sa ating lahi. Dinggin po sana ng mga Senador at ng ating pinakamamahal na Pangulo ang bulong ng silakbo ng puso ng ating mga bayani.

Ako ay Pilipino, noon, ngayon at magpasawalang-hanggan. Mahal ko ang Bayang Pilipinas!

Magandang araw at maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The speech is hereby referred to the appropriate committee.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado who are here at the Plenary Hall. They are his constituents from Pulilan and Malolos City: Mr. Bernardo Ramos, Mr. Rodney Riteza and Mr. Rommel Ramos Sr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please rise to be acknowledged.

The guests of Representative Sy-Alvarado, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. And also, the students from the Bulacan State University, they are also the guests of the Honorable Sy-Alvarado.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please rise, students from the Bulacan State University. Thank you for your visit and welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I would like to request that the Gentleman from the Third District of

Pampanga, our Dep. Majority Leader, Rep. Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr., be recognized for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Gonzales is now recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GONZALES (A.D.)

REP. GONZALES (A. D.). *Salamat po.*

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

With the pronouncement of the President to launch the biggest infrastructure project push in the Philippine history, with his mantra, “build, build, build,” construction industry is seen to propel economic growth in the next five-and-a-half years.

Seven months have passed since the opening of our session, but little did we know that it has also been seven months that the following infrastructure projects have yet to be accomplished. Despite the Duterte administration’s efforts to promote road developmental projects, there is still an obvious slow progress for major projects. Some of these projects are still on the drawing board, some have yet to be fully accomplished, and some have yet to be implemented.

Let us take a look at the convenience and the reduction of travel time in the affected areas brought about by the completion of the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road or STAR Project and the Muntinlupa-Cavite Expressway referred to as Daang Hari–SLEX Link Road Expressway Project. For the STAR Project, travel time in said area was lessened from 55 minutes to 31 minutes. For the Daang Hari–SLEX Link Road Expressway Project, the travel time from Daang Hari to Alabang Interchange was reduced by an average of 45 minutes.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, with these indications of a clear blueprint on how to remedy the traffic crisis and ease traffic congestion, we should give priority to this Public-Private Partnership or PPP road projects. There are several factors which contribute to the delay in the evaluation, implementation, commencement, completion or full operation of these projects. We have to ascertain what these stumbling blocks are and come up with effective remedies to solve them. We all know that the delay in these projects does not only hamper national growth and progress, but also exposes the government to unnecessary expenses which can be avoided or otherwise prevented.

The Department of Public Works and Highways has three major ongoing solicited PPP projects: the NAIA Expressway Project Phase II, the Tarlac–Pangasinan–La Union Expressway or TPLEX, and the Cavite–Laguna Expressway or the CALA Project. So far, the actual

cumulative accomplishment of the approved nominated contractor of this project, as of December 20, 2016, is 99.10 percent based on the revised schedule as reported by the independent consultant. The target completion for the connectivity of NAIA Expressway Project Phase 2 to NAIA Expressway Project Phase 1 is in March 2017. Once this project becomes complete and fully operational, traffic congestion in the vicinity of the NAIA terminals will be reduced and the international and domestic investment environment will improve.

Next, we go to the TPLEX Project. It is an 88.85-kilometer expressway from Tarlac City, Tarlac to Rosario, and La Union. The project aims to reduce travel time from Tarlac City to Gerona from 45 minutes to 10 minutes, travel time from Tarlac City to Paniqui, Tarlac from 1 hour to 15 minutes, travel time from Tarlac to Rosales from 2 hours to 30 minutes, travel time from Tarlac to Urdaneta from 2 hours to 30–40 minutes, and travel time from Tarlac to Rosario from 3½ hours to 1 hour.

The TPLEX construction phase from Tarlac City to Rosales, Pangasinan is already substantially completed. The construction phase from Rosales, Pangasinan to Urdaneta City is also substantially completed. Meanwhile, the construction phase from Urdaneta City to Rosario, La Union is 71.45 percent accomplished.

Another ongoing PPP project is the Cavite–Laguna Expressway. This is a four-lane 44.20 kilometer closed-system toll expressway connecting CAVITEX and South Luzon Expressway or SLEX. The project will start from CAVITEX in Kawit, Cavite and will end at the SLEX-Mamplasan Interchange in Biñan, Laguna. This will reduce travel time from CAVITEX to SLEX by about 45 minutes and ease the heavily congested Governor’s Drive, Aguinaldo Highway and Sta. Rosa–Tagaytay Road. The construction start date for this project is the first quarter of 2017 with its completion set in 2020. As of December 2016, 624 out of 682 letters of notice or about 91.50 percent were served to the identified affected lot owners.

One obvious factor which contributes to the delay in the projects is the slow progress in the right-of-way acquisition. This is a realistic problem for the CALA Expressway Project.

We have to address the stringent requirements provided under Republic Act No. 10752. Under said law, the replacement cost at current market value of the improvements and structures is determined by the implementing agency—a government financial institution with adequate experience in property appraisal and an independent property appraiser accredited by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. However, this slows down the process of the construction of the project.

We, likewise, have to address the problem about the Land Bank of the Philippines refusing to assess lands as

it needs more assessors. We also have to come up with the remedy on how to relax, if not reduce, the number of requirements as required by the DPWH Accounting Office as compared to the requirements provided by the Commission on Audit. We also have to address the lean plantilla of lawyers and engineers in the DPWH as well as the legal manpower assigned to the needs of the CALA project. We also have to address the Department of Environment's snail-paced issuance of Environmental Compliance Certificates, as well as other certificates which are crucial to the projects.

The above problems are just in the tip of the iceberg. What we really need to do is to sit down with the concerned government agencies and entities responsible for facilitating and expediting the right-of-way-acquisition for the smooth progress of the PPP projects. Aside from these right-of-way claims, there are other stumbling blocks which we should ascertain and resolve.

We should also focus our attention on the solicited PPP projects under feasibility study and ascertain if there is a delay in evaluating them. We have Phase 2 of the Central Luzon Link Expressway or CLLEX, the Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike or LLED, and Phases 1 and 2 of the North Luzon Expressway East or NLEE. Phase 2 of the CLLEX project is an extension of CLLEX Phase 1 and connects Cabanatuan City and San Jose City, passing through the municipalities of Talavera, Llanera in Nueva Ecija. It is about 35.70 kilometers in road length, and will provide a free-flowing alternative route, and decongest traffic along the Pan Philippine Highway between said cities of Nueva Ecija and the town of Plaridel in Bulacan.

Mme. Speaker, the LLED project is envisioned to provide a high-standard highway dike that will facilitate traffic flow and mitigate flooding in the western coastal communities along Laguna Lake, from Bicutan/Taguig in Metro Manila through Calamba to Los Baños, Laguna. This expressway will relieve the heavily travelled Bicutan to Calamba corridor of the SLEX and the Manila South Road and will serve as an alternative to the congested road of the national highway from Calamba to Los Baños. The proposed project will be used to integrate the flood control system to protect the flood prone areas located along the shore line of Laguna Lake.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the NLEE is a 91.20-kilometer project which will form an important transport access in the eastern area of Region III. The project starts the end point of La Mesa Dam Parkway and junction of C-6 in San Jose Del Monte via Norzagaray, Angat, San Ildefonso, San Miguel, Gapan and Sta. Rosa, in parallel with the Pan Philippine Highway up to Cabanatuan City. The project will cross Angat River, Peñaranda River and Pampanga River.

We also have PPA projects for business case. These include the Camarines Sur Expressway, the

Quezon–Bicol Expressway, the Batangas City–Bauan Toll Road Project, the Davao City Expressway, the Davao–Digos Expressway, the TPLEX Extension, and the Delpa–Pasig–Marikina Expressway.

Mr. Speaker, Mme. Speaker, I also would like to mention the unsolicited PPP projects which include the ongoing NLEX–SLEX Connector Road Project, and those proposals for evaluation to include the Manila Bay Integrated Flood Control, Coastal Defense and Expressway Project; the North Luzon Expressway Project, Stage 1 (La Mesa Parkways Project); the Manila–Taguig Expressway; the Manila–Quezon Expressway Project; and the Canlubang Bay Bypass Road Project.

For those implemented by the Toll Regulatory Board, we have the NLEX Harbor Link Project (Segments 8.2, 9 and 10) for Manila North Expressway Project; the Metro Manila Expressway Project (C-6); the Metro Manila Skyway or MMS Stage 3; and the South Luzon Expressway Toll Road 4 or TR-4, Sto. Tomas–Lucena Project.

For one PPP project implemented by the Department of Education, we have the PPP School Infrastructure Project (PSIP) Phase II from Metro Manila. Now, all these PPP projects, whether solicited or unsolicited, ongoing or still undergoing a feasibility study, for evaluation or for business case, are basically aimed at a common purpose, which is to decongest traffic problems in the country and provide an efficient, faster, and convenient transportation flow. The overall benefits to be derived from these projects are in the improvement of the connectivity and capacity of the transport network going to and from Metro Manila, as well as going to and from major provinces in our country.

At these pressing times, Mme. Speaker, when the public clamors for a solution to the traffic woes and the government continues to ponder on possible solutions, whether permanent or temporary, I am of the firm belief that these public works projects are the best solution to such a dilemma.

Mme. Speaker, maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.) The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.) Majority Leader.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Aurelio “Dodong” Gonzales ...

REP. MARCOLETA. Mme. Speaker, may I be recognized?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Yes, what is the pleasure of the Gentleman?

REP. MARCOLETA. Mme. Speaker, I wonder, I wonder if my colleague is still in a position to accommodate some clarificatory questions?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Of course, Mme. Speaker, anytime.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.) The Gentleman may go ahead with his interpellation.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker., Mme. Speaker, this Representation fully understands his frustration in not being able to see the projects which are supposed to be completed at a given time but remain to be in the planning stage because of what the Gentleman termed as “the stringent requirements under the law.”

The Gentleman specified Republic Act No. 10752. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Yes, Mme. Speaker, that is Republic Act No. 10752—An Act Facilitating the Acquisition of Right-of-Way Site or Location for National Government Infrastructure Projects, Mme. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mme. Speaker, the Gentleman will understand that these requirements, stringent as they are, have been put in place by Congress to ascertain not only the quality of the projects but to also assure the integrity of the processes involved. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). I agree with that, Mme. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. And considering that he agrees with the requirements designed to ensure the integrity of the processes as well as the quality of projects, which is, of course, the very motive why the law was enacted, how would the Gentleman propose to delimit these requirements in order that we will be able to see the facilitation of the completion of these projects which, to my mind, will contribute to the achievement of our development targets?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, of course, the Gentleman from 1-SAGIP, Hon. Rodante Marcoleta, is correct.

Mme. Speaker, in the Sixteenth Congress, they filed this R.A. No. 10752 and this was signed by the President. The President, Pres. Benigno Aquino, signed this law and its implementing rules and regulations. I do not

think they have already been implemented. That is why, this humble Representation, Mme. Speaker, has already filed an amendment to this Republic Act No. 10752 so that we can expedite what Congressman Marcoleta is saying regarding the right-of-way acquisition and the stringent requirements. So, I think this is the best solution to expedite all these PPP projects because they all boil down to the right-of-way problem. That is why, Mme. Speaker, I already filed the amendment to Republic Act No. 10752, Mme. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mme. Speaker, before I continue my interpellation, the picture on the board is not my picture. I am distracted, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). That is not my fault.

REP. MARCOLETA. While my name is written on the board, the picture does not belong to me, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mme. Speaker, that is not my fault. *(Laughter)*

REP. MARCOLETA. He is more handsome than me, Mme. Speaker. *(Laughter)*

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). I am just answering the Gentleman’s question, Mme. Speaker. *(Laughter)*

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, may I go back to my previous question. I do not argue with the rationale of expediting all these projects. I am only trying to insist on the balancing of interests. I am asking my colleague, Mme. Speaker, on how he will be able to balance the interests of providing all these basic development projects for our country and, at the same time, being able to guard and to put in place the necessary requirements so that both ends will meet. Meaning to say, in balancing these interests, we will hit two birds with one stone.

I think it is very difficult, Mme. Speaker. The requirements are there. I am just asking him, what are the minimum requirements that need to be there without sacrificing the quality and the integrity of the process? We want the projects to be facilitated so that we can facilitate our economic growth. But if we can be more specific, Mme. Speaker, what are the basic requirements, stringent requirements, that need to be stricken off the law by way of amendments without sacrificing the projects’ quality?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Yes, Mme. Speaker, I understand the Gentleman from 1-SAGIP. It is two parts, Mme. Speaker: one, regarding the solicited and

the unsolicited projects why we are not moving. I think, number one, because of these requirements.

I will give the Gentleman examples, Mme. Speaker: the C-6 and this CALAX project. I will show the right-of-way problem to be resolved in July 2017. The groundbreaking date is the first week of February, depending on our new administration. There has been no issuance between the San Miguel Corporation and the LBP with regard to the road connecting SLEX and CAVITEX, and that is why it is not moving. That is why there were problems encountered, like for example, the loss of documents of property owners. If they cannot provide documents, it is assumed that the land is State-owned. That is why if the Gentleman listened to my speech, he will know that we really have to resolve this problem. There is also the updated market value of the right-of-way, and the very lean plantilla in the legal service. In the CALAX project, we need legal—*kailangan po natin ng abogado*, the legal person who will resolve this problem with the CALAX project. The plantilla is in need, especially of engineers and lawyers. The Office of the Solicitor General, the department assigned to CALAX, needs more engineers. The ISFs, the informal settlers, we have to resolve this.

That is why, secondly, I answered the Gentleman that we have to amend this RA No. 10752, particularly sections such as Section 4. I think *masyado pong mahaba ito kung sasagutin ko ang tanong* regarding RA No. 10752, but at the least, I can answer the Gentleman, *bakit po tayong na-delay sa mga proyektong ito despite partial payment requirements being a handful already*. The DENR also has a problem of issuing ECCs. Mme. Speaker, that is the problem in the picture *na nakikita ko po; iyon ang problema*.

In the accounting department of the Department of Public Works, there are so many requirements before you can implement these, before you can have a permit to enter. That is why, *sinasabi ko po*, under the law, a GFI entity would assign market value to the land, and all procurement and national government should undergo Republic Act No. 9184, Mme. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mme. Speaker, is my understanding correct that the stringent requirements are purely legal or they are mostly affected by the operational requirements, meaning, administrative? Does the Gentleman have problems on administrative aspects, or those other than the legal, or purely legal?

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Well, it is all part of the problem, Mme. Speaker—administrative, legal, technical, I think, everything. Particularly, if the whole pie, 80 percent or 70 to 80 percent, the problem is regarding the right-of-way, you cannot resolve the right-of-way problem if we will follow R.A. No. 10752 and

you have no lawyers, you have no engineers because, in certain projects, you need a lawyer. For example, the Office of the Solicitor General, *mayroon pong dapat abogado iyan on a particular project*. That is why I am saying, legally and technically, there is a problem, Mme. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. That will be all, Mme. Speaker.

Thank you very much, my colleague.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Aurelio “Dong” Gonzales, Jr., including the interpellation of the Honorable Marcoleta, to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Gonzales, as well as the interpellation, to the appropriate committee is hereby approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Lady from Party-List KUSUG TAUSUG, Rep. Shernee Abubakar Tan, for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Representative from the Party-List KUSUG TAUSUG, the Hon. Shernee Abubakar Tan, is now recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. TAN (S.)

REP. TAN (S.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues in this august Chamber, Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand before you today in my ardent desire to contribute to the noble intention of effecting changes in our country, as the Representative of the KUSUG TAUSUG Party-List.

When we talk of Mindanao today, what automatically comes into the discourse are matters of security, fear, and tragic displacement of people owing to clashes which is more criminal than ideological. This is a far cry from Mindanao and Sulu of the bygone days where opportunities were aplenty and the region was replete with resources.

This humble Representation therefore is emboldened by the cries of the greater multitude wallowing in utter despair by the rising incidence of poverty.

Mme. Speaker, and my esteemed colleagues, I beg your indulgence to allow me to cite some facts and figures with the hope of shedding light on some issues and to view the situation in the ARMM from a more noble perspective rather than the narrow lens of political patronage.

Under President Aquino's watch, massive funds flowed profusely into the ARMM's coffers as its budget tripled from P10.4 billion in 2010 to P29.4 billion in 2016. In addition, billions of funds were released through national government agencies on top of financial assistance from PAPAYA and PAMANA Programs and from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The funds were supposedly intended to implement socio-economic programs and to support community development, regional infrastructure and strengthening governance in the ARMM.

Of these massive funds allotted and made available, Mme. Speaker, allow me to share comparative figures and data that are equally massive, but only in terms of the magnitude of their sense and meaning. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the ARMM remains the poorest region in the country with poverty incidence among households of 53.4 percent in the first semester of 2015 from 46.9 percent in the same period in 2012. At least 11 percent of 5.1 million poorest households are in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu which comprise the ARMM, according to the 2015 National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction.

Mme. Speaker, this humble Representation calls upon this august Chamber to be analytical on the data cited and look for the true meaning hidden in the charts of poverty incidence. It is worthy to mention that despite being autonomous, the ARMM receives approximately 98 percent of its operating revenue from the national government and, in return, contributes a measly 0.7 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The World Bank noted in a study that the ARMM suffers from inadequate basic services and poor infrastructure, poor local governance and a weak private sector. The World Bank recommended solutions among others to improve governance and strengthen institutions particularly in conflict-affected areas by recognizing the efforts of local officials in the components of the ARMM, who promoted transparency and accountability in the implementation of projects.

This humble Representation, who is a native of Sulu, is groping even just for an outline of the bleak circumstance in my region that may give semblance of a figure or a form from which to demand a response from, or one who can give rhyme and reason to the glaring disparity between funds allocated and the

rising incidence of poverty. This is a mismatch by any proportion. The great nationalist and African patriot Nelson Mandela once said, and I quote:

Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

Are we not human and should we not be humane?

Mme. Speaker, the ARMM was sentenced by the Aquino administration as a "failed experiment." Yet, in the twilight of the past administration, the ARMM received the biggest chunk ever. I cannot escape the analogy of a sick cow already destined to a slaughterhouse, yet fed abundantly beforehand to fatten its meat for additional gains for the sake of expediency.

As a run-up to the 2016 national and local elections, there was a flurry of projects, especially construction of roads as if dictated by haste, and true enough, haste makes waste. It is uncertain if these roads meet the standards of construction. This Representation eagerly awaits the comments and observations of the DPWH on this matter.

This humble Representation therefore was gravely alarmed when the ARMM proposed a budget for 2017 as contained in the National Expenditure Program prepared by the previous administration which further ballooned to P40.5 billion or four times bigger than its budget in 2010. She then raised numerous issues during the budget hearings to elicit valid answers on why the ARMM's budget grew bigger and bigger every year but the people continue to live in the quagmire of poverty. But this Representation has kept her objections and other issues within the confines of the House of Representatives as she undoubtedly keeps her trust and confidence in the leadership of this august Chamber.

I was terribly surprised therefore when I read in some national dailies that Congressmen from the ARMM even had the temerity to approach Senator Ping Lacson to plead not to slash the P1.5 billion allegedly allocated for each of them. So, may I state for the record, Mme. Speaker, that this Representative of KUSUG TAUSUG Party-List, which is based in Sulu, a core territory of the ARMM, was not among those House Members who approached Senator Lacson.

I therefore challenge, Mme. Speaker, those Congressmen from the ARMM, who came to see Senator Lacson in his office, to be brave enough to come forward and explain if they, indeed, pleaded for the retention of their respective allocation of P1.5 billion. As Representatives of the ARMM, your actions certainly reflect the people of the ARMM. It is therefore just and proper that you give your side of the story, not

only to protect the honor and dignity of the people you represent, but also to shield this hallowed institution from vicious criticisms.

Mme. Speaker, one of the essential things I learned during the budget hearings was that it is contrary to the notion that the people in the ARMM have been overlooked, abandoned or neglected and left with budgetary crumbs that had pushed them to seek redress against the government. As a matter of fact, the ARMM is one of the most favored entities having received billions of pesos from the government. It seems not superfluous to cite again that the ARMM budget has tripled from 2010 to 2016 even as the poverty incidence in the ARMM continues to decline as if there was no economic intervention from the government.

This situation, Mme. Speaker, has caused the people in the ARMM to wonder, where are the billions?

The Commission on Audit gave us hints as to where the billions of pesos allocated to the ARMM went. In its audit reports for the preceding years, the COA revealed that there had been unliquidated cash advances, numerous anomalous purchases not supported with official receipts, questionable procurements and allotments which still remain unaccounted for.

During the budget hearings, I persistently requested for supporting documents from the ARMM officials that will either refute or comply with the COA findings, but as of today, they have yet to fulfill their promise, as no single document was ever submitted to me or to the Committee on Appropriations. It is very apparent that officials of the ARMM have been showing a cavalier attitude in complying with the COA findings.

This humble Representation, however, heavily relied on the wisdom of the revered Members of this august Chamber when she voted “Yes” to the proposed 2017 budget as she strongly supports the noble objectives of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to buttress peace and development efforts in the ARMM in order to free it from the enclave of penury and destitution so that we may attain the most elusive peace in our land.

Mme. Speaker, poverty is not merely the absence of food on the table or the absence of opportunities to earn a decent living. There are other absences or lack of them that compound the people’s misery, like access to quality education through the construction of schools and additional classrooms; well-equipped government hospitals and ample rural health units; infrastructure facilities necessary for transport and marketing of agricultural products; air services, energy and telecommunications needs should also be looked into. The previously mentioned subjects are the competencies of the national government, which have already been devolved to ARMM.

As honorable Members of this august Chamber, we are expected to place our nation’s interests above petty

political lines and personal agenda. Let us join hands to lift up the people of the ARMM before they drop further into the abyss of the very impoverished and the inconsequential.

Let me then urge my colleagues in this august Chamber to investigate this matter so that we can ferret out the truth behind the figures, we can right the wrong beneath the facts, and redress the grievances of those whose honor and reputation may have been so grossly assailed, and plug the bleeding of government coffers.

Let me end this privilege speech with the undying words of the great Chinese philosopher Confucius:

In a country well-governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, my esteemed colleagues.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Hon. Shernee Abubakar Tan to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Tan to the appropriate committee is hereby approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move to suspend the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby suspended.

ROLL CALL

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 60, dated January 23, 2017:

PRESENT

Abad	Cari	Geron	Paduano
Abaya	Casilao	Go (A.C.)	Palma
Abayon	Castelo	Go (M.)	Pancho
Abellanos	Castro (F.L.)	Gonzaga	Panganiban
Abu	Castro (F.H.)	Gonzales (A.P.)	Panotes
Abueg	Cayetano	Gonzales (A.D.)	Papandayan
Acharon	Celeste	Gonzalez	Pimentel
Acop	Cerifica	Gorriceta	Pineda
Acosta	Cerilles	Gullas	Plaza
Acosta-Alba	Chavez	Hernandez	Primicias-Agabas
Advincula	Chipeco	Herrera-Dy	Quimbo
Aggabao	Co	Hofer	Radaza
Aglipay-Villar	Cojuangco	Jalosjos	Ramos
Albano	Collantes	Javier	Revilla
Almonte	Cortes	Kho	Roa-Puno
Alonte-Naguiat	Cortuna	Labadlabad	Rodriguez (I.)
Alvarez (F.)	Cosalan	Lacson	Roman
Alvarez (M.)	Crisologo	Lagman	Romualdez
Alvarez (P.)	Cua	Lanete	Romualdo
Amante	Cuaresma	Laogan	Roque (H.)
Amatong	Cueva	Lazatin	Salceda
Angara-Castillo	Dalipe	Lee	Salo
Antonio	Daza	Limkaichong	Salon
Aragones	De Jesus	Lobregat	Sambar
Arcillas	De Venecia	Lopez (B.)	Sandoval
Arenas	De Vera	Lopez (M.L.)	Santos-Recto
Atienza	Defensor	Macapagal-Arroyo	Sarmiento (C.)
Bag-ao	Del Mar	Malapitan	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Bagatsing	Del Rosario	Manalo	Savellano
Banal	Deloso-Montalla	Mangaoang	Siao
Barzaga	Dimaporo (A.)	Mangudadatu (Z.)	Silverio
Batocabe	Dimaporo (M.K.)	Marcoleta	Singson
Bautista-Bandigan	Durano	Marcos	Suansing (E.)
Belaro	Elago	Mariño	Suansing (H.)
Belmonte (F.)	Enverga	Marquez	Suarez
Belmonte (R.)	Erice	Martinez	Sy-Alvarado
Benitez	Eriguel	Matugas	Tambunting
Bernos	Escudero	Mellana	Tan (A.)
Bertiz	Estrella	Mendoza	Tan (M.)
Biazon	Eusebio	Mercado	Tan (S.)
Billones	Evardone	Mirasol	Tejada
Biron	Fariñas	Montoro	Teves
Bolilia	Ferriol-Pascual	Nava	Tiangco
Bondoc	Flores	Nieto	Ting
Bordado	Fortun	Noel	Tinio
Bravo (A.)	Fortuno	Nogralas (J.J.)	Tugna
Bravo (M.V.)	Fuentebella	Nogralas (K.A.)	Turabin-Hataman
Brosas	Garbin	Nolasco	Ty
Bulut-Begtang	Garcia (G.)	Nuñez-Malanyaon	Ungab
Cagas	Garcia (J.E.)	Oaminal	Unico
Calderon	Garcia-Albano	Olivarez	Uy (J.)
Calixto-Rubiano	Garin (R.)	Ong (E.)	Uy (R.)
Campos	Gasataya	Ong (H.)	Uybarreta
Canama	Gatchalian	Ortega (P.)	Vargas
		Ortega (V.N.)	Vargas-Alfonso
		Pacquiao	Velarde

Velasco-Catera	Villarin
Veloso	Violago
Vergara	Yap (M.)
Villanueva	Zubiri
Villarica	

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 229 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). With 229 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 59, dated January 18, 2017.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Journal of January 18, 2017 is hereby approved. The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that the Privilege Hour be extended to accommodate other Members who want to avail of it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby extended. The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Lady from the Party-List AMIN, Rep. Sitti Djalila A. Turabin-Hataman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Turabin-Hataman of Party-List AMIN is hereby recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. TURABIN-HATAMAN

REP. TURABIN-HATAMAN. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

I rise on the issue of giving value to our traditional art.

Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi taala wabarakatuh.

Mme. Speaker, fellow Members of this people's House, I beg your indulgence as this Representation, a

daughter of the province of Basilan, of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, brings forward an observation brought about by the recently concluded Miss Universe pre-pageant event featuring our very own Mindanao tapestry.

As a Filipino playing host to this prestigious event, I set aside my own personal convictions on beauty pageants and join the entire nation taking pride in this privilege. We salute and give due recognition to the men and women working hard to make this a success for and in behalf of the country and the Filipino people.

As a Representative of Anak Mindanao, we further take pride in the showcase of the tapestry and fabrics representing the richness of each of our ethnic communities, a tribute to our colorfully diverse heritage. We are, however very much disheartened to take notice of the fact that our very own yakan tennun or popularly known as Yakan weave was presented as a fabric from Region IX instead of from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. We recognize the presence of a Yakan Village in Zamboanga City promoted as a popular tourist destination producing yakan tennun and we are sincerely grateful for this support to our traditional art. Indeed, we need all the help we can get in the preservation and promotion of our local products. However, this is also why we see the need to bring this matter forward. Our yakan tennun is not just a product. It is a traditional art, one of the priceless traditional arts of weaving of the Muslim ethnic groups along with the landap of the Maranaos, the inaul of the Maguindanaoans, and the pis siyabit of the Tausugs, a traditional art that survived and was passed on for centuries. While those who fail to appreciate culture may perhaps see just a piece of cloth in our weaves, for us, the wisdom, the values and the very spirit of our forebears live in every single strand of every piece of cloth. It represents our identity, our very being. These colors, patterns and techniques that we see and touch today are the very same colors, patterns and techniques created by our forebears at least 300 years ago.

More than a product, our weaves are a tradition, rooted in our homelands. The landap, even when woven by a Maranao in Cagayan de Oro City, will always be a landap of Lanao. Just like the abel iloco, even when produced in Metro Manila will still be abel iloco, because we are not speaking only of the cloth, but of a tradition attached to a community.

We do not complain about the use of our traditional arts particularly our weaves by anyone. In fact, we strongly support its promotion by all Filipinos as it makes us feel that we are part of this nation, that Filipinos are not limited to those who wear the barong tagalog.

Our only appeal is for our traditional arts to be recognized as having originated from us, that it is our own distinct contribution. We find it a little unfair when anything bad, negative or ugly can be easily said of our

making, but something beautiful and precious cannot be appropriately attributed to us. Parang hindi naman po siguro makatarungan na kung kaguluhan, problema o pangit ay napakadaling sabihing kagagawan namin, ngunit kung makabuluhan, maipagmamalaki o isang magandang habi ay hindi maaaring sabihing kami ang may likha at nanggaling sa amin.

As a people, so much has already been taken away from us. We thus call upon everyone to take on a conscious effort in ensuring that nothing more is taken away, because no people and community must be denied of their rightful heritage.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Hon. Sitti Djalila A. Turabin-Hataman to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Turabin-Hataman to the appropriate committee is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Sarah Jane Elago of the Party-List KABATAAN is hereby recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this Representation stands on the heart of the matter of the third round of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

Over the weekend, while peace negotiations between the government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front pushed forward in Rome, Italy, elements of the 39th Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines launched a military offensive in the town of Makilala in North Cotabato, which resulted in casualties on both sides.

The AFP says that their troops were only responding to a report of extortion. The New People's Army, meanwhile, provided a more succinct detail—an NPA unit was encamped in Sitio Concepcion, Barangay Kisante, Makilala last Saturday, and the AFP pursued them thereby grossly violating the government's own unilateral ceasefire.

This latest incident which, as we again emphasize, occurred while peace talks were ongoing in Rome, highlights the AFP's weak, if not totally absent, commitment to pursue peace. How can one side talk to the other side about pursuing bilateral ceasefire when it cannot rein in its own forces?

For the past weeks, the GRP panel and no less than President Rodrigo R. Duterte himself has been emphasizing the need to reach a bilateral ceasefire agreement. Yet, the flagrant violation of the ongoing unilateral ceasefire, coupled with the Duterte administration's non-committal to the release of political prisoners, is making the talks stand on shaky ground. Instead of fulfilling the GRP's obligation to immediately release political prisoners under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees or JASIG and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL—agreements that have been reaffirmed in the first round of the renewed talks, the Duterte administration is forcing its way to a bilateral ceasefire, an approach that is perilously similar to those taken by past administrations that ultimately led to the breakdown of past negotiations.

Bukod dito, ang AFP ay mukhang hindi naman talaga sinsero sa pagpapatupad ng unilateral ceasefire. Ang insidente noong Sabado ay hindi unang pagkakataon na lumabag ang ating sandatahang lakas sa unilateral ceasefire. As the GRP-NDFP peace talks enter the third round, we thus call on the Duterte administration to honor the JASIG and the CARHRIHL, and immediately cause the release of all political prisoners. After all, the NDFP has already stated that it is willing to enter into a bilateral ceasefire agreement enforceable once the political prisoners are ordered released. Such move will undoubtedly ease the already tenuous situation the peace talks are now in.

We welcome the signing of the supplemental guidelines to implement the JASIG. Hopefully, this will help pave the way to a more stable negotiation, and inevitably, to just and lasting peace.

Panghuling punto ko po, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the issue on the release of political prisoners should be immediately addressed to ensure that the negotiations will push forward to the heart of the matter which is the discussion on socio-economic reforms that address the roots of the armed struggle waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines. It would be a shame for the Philippine government to cause the breakdown of the talks even as the negotiating panels reach this essential part.

The NDFP negotiating panel has submitted an 84-page proposed draft of the CASER or the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic

Reforms during the third round of talks. The draft CASER tackles pernicious socio-economic issues including landlessness, lack of national industries, discussions on economic policy, and other substantial matters. These matters are necessary to end the armed conflict and develop the country. It will also tackle an issue close to the heart of the youth: access to and quality of education in the country.

Mme. Speaker, to realize the magnitude of what is at stake, we should remember that the peace negotiations are not just about the cessation of hostilities but ultimately about resolving the root cause of destitution and poverty in our country.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, despite the setbacks posed by the recalcitrant stance of the GRP as regards the release of political prisoners, the youth still hopes and prays for the success of the peace negotiations. May the peace negotiators on both sides be enlightened and iron out differences in this historic third round of negotiations.

Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker, at magandang araw sa lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move to refer the privilege speech of the Hon. Sarah Jane Elago to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none, the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Elago to the appropriate committee is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move to terminate the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby terminated.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move to take up an administrative matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader may proceed.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we reconsider the referral of the following measures:

House Resolution No. 680, from the Committee on Human Rights to the Committee on Rules; and

House Resolution No. 681, from the Committee on Human Rights to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 5:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:42 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up the Additional Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please proceed.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Resolution on First Reading and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding reference:

RESOLUTION

House Resolution No. 708, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GROSSLY DISADVANTAGEOUS AND HIGHLY IRREGULAR LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENT AND GAMING CORPORATION (PAGCOR) AND VANDERWOOD MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (VANDERWOOD)”

By Representatives Bondoc and Belaro
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 650

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 650, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

May I request that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.*

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 650, entitled: RESOLUTION COMMENDING RAFAEL BITANGA, A MIGRANT FROM LAOAG CITY, ILOCOS NORTE, FOR THE RECOGNITION AND AWARD RECEIVED FROM THE NATIONAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES YOUTH PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 650

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 650.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

House Resolution No. 650 is hereby adopted.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 5:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:46 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 708 ON AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer House Resolution No. 708 to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, January 24, 2017, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until four o'clock tomorrow afternoon, January 24, 2017.

It was 5:47 p.m.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)