



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

## House of Representatives

Vol. 3

Monday, December 9, 2019

No. 32c

### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 1:00 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez presiding.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5683, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE 31<sup>ST</sup> OF JULY OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NONWORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF TANGALAN, PROVINCE OF AKLAN TO BE KNOWN AS 'TANGALAN DAY' IN CELEBRATION OF ITS SEPARATION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAKATO, AKLAN AND IN COMMEMORATION OF THE HEROES OF VIVO REVOLT”

By Representative Haresco  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5684, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT

NO. 9208, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10364, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT TO INSTITUTE POLICIES TO ELIMINATE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ESTABLISHING THE NECESSARY INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION AND SUPPORT OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR ITS VIOLATIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Aragonés  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 5685, entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF EIGHT BILLION FOUR HUNDRED MILLION PESOS (P8,400,000,000.00) AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2019 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Enverga  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 5686, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE MARSHAL SERVICE, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Hernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5687, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE CORDILLERA”  
By Representatives Bernos, Bulut, Chungalao, Dalog, Go (Mark) and Mangaoang  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5688, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE EASTERN PANGASINAN DISTRICT

HOSPITAL FROM ONE HUNDRED FIFTY (150) TO TWO HUNDRED FIFTY (250) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5689, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PINSAL FALLS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN NICOLAS, PROVINCE OF PANGASINANAS TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5690, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING DIKET FALLS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF UMINGAN, PROVINCE OF PANGASINANAS TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5691, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE MARSHAL SERVICE, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5693, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE DULOP NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – LABANGON ANNEX IN BARANGAY LABANGON, MUNICIPALITY OF DUMINGAG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR FROM THE DULOP NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS LABANGON SUBANEN AGRICULTURAL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Yu  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5694, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE CITY OF PAGADIAN IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR AS THE REGIONAL CENTER OF REGION IX - ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA REGION”

By Representative Yu  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5695, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BENEFITS OF BARANGAY OFFICIALS AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE PARAGRAPH (A), SECTION 393, CHAPTER IV, BOOK III OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991’, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5696, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES OF BARANGAY TANOD MEMBERS WHO HAVE RENDERED AT LEAST ONE YEAR OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN THE BARANGAY GOVERNMENT”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5699, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY COCOY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TINOC, PROVINCE OF IFUGAO AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Chungalao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5700, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 73 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990’, AS AMENDED BY SECTION 35 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8551, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tallado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5701, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING PRIVATE BUSINESS

ENTERPRISES TO CONTRIBUTE AND SET ASIDE AN AMOUNT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ITS EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTEE'S EMPLOYEES OR THE UNEMPLOYMENT LABOR ASSURANCE MUTUAL FUND ACT”

By Representative Lacson  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 5702, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE TRADE OF ELECTRONIC NICOTINE AND NON-NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS (ENDS/ENNDS) AND HEATED TOBACCO PRODUCTS (HTPs), PARTICULARLY, THE MANUFACTURING, USE, SALE, PACKAGING, DISTRIBUTION, AND COMMUNICATIONS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5703, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE CAGAYAN DE ORO CONVENTION CENTER LOCATED IN BARANGAY INDAHAG, CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY INTO THE AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL, JR. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5704, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE LAGUINDINGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LOCATED IN LAGUINDINGAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL INTO THE EMMANUEL N. PELAEZ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LAGUINDINGAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL)”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5705, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ABS-CBN CORPORATION (FORMERLY ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7966, OR 'AN ACT GRANTING ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT,

INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES' FOR TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 5706, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING AND ESTABLISHING THE USE OF WASTE TO ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES AND FACILITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

House Bill No. 5707, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 5708, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SOLO PARENTS WELFARE ACT OF 2000, EXPANDING ITS COVERAGE, INCREASING THE BENEFITS OF SOLO PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN, REDEFINING SOLO PARENTS, PROVIDING PENAL PROVISIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Pacquiao (Alberto)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 5709, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SALARY STEP INCREMENT FOR TEACHERS WITH SPECIALIZATION IN SCIENCE AND/OR MATHEMATICS”

By Representative Bolilia  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 5710, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING R.A. 9372 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ACT TO SECURE THE STATE AND PROTECT OUR PEOPLE FROM TERRORISM OR THE HUMAN SECURITY

ACT (HSA) OF 2007, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Bolilia  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 5711, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING DECEMBER FOUR OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF CEBU AND THE PROVINCE OF CEBU WITH ITS COMPONENT CITIES AND A SPECIAL WORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, IN HONOR OF THE LATE SENATOR SERGIO V. OSMENA, JR.”

By Representative Abellanosa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5712, entitled:

“AN ACT MODIFYING THE SALARY SCHEDULE FOR CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL AND AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF ADDITIONAL BENEFITS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Duterte, Romualdez (Ferdinand) and Ungab  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 5713, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING AS AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCE WHEN THE VICTIM OF A CRIME IS A SENIOR CITIZEN AND MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCE WHEN THE OFFENDER IS A SENIOR CITIZEN AND AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5714, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF THE PENSIONS OF RETIREES FROM THE GOVERNMENT WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 5715, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING REPRESENTATION OF

SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE DIFFERENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5716, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AS EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE ENTITIES BY GRANTING INCREASED INCENTIVES TO PRIVATE ENTITIES THAT EMPLOY SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CERTAIN PROVISION OF R.A. NO. 9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2010”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 5717, entitled:

“AN ACT TO AMEND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10868, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CENTENARIANS ACT OF 2016 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 5718, entitled:

“AN ACT TO AMEND REPUBLIC ACT 9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2010 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE”

By Representative Datol  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

RESOLUTION

House Resolution No. 571, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGEDLY ONEROUS CONCESSION AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE TWO WATER CONCESSIONAIRES, NAMELY MANILA WATER COMPANY,

INC. AND MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.”

By Representatives Zarate, Gaité and Cullamat  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 123), re H.B. No. 5738, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) IN THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA, TO BE KNOWN AS THE PUP-SANTAROSA CAMPUS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 123

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Ungab and Fernandez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 124), re H.B. No. 5739, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) IN CALOOCAN CITY-NORTH, TO BE KNOWN AS THE PUP – CALOOCAN CITY – NORTH CAMPUS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2104

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Ungab and Malapitan

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 125), re H.B. No. 5740, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE TABUK CITY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BANTAY EXTENSION IN BARANGAY BANTAY, TABUK CITY, PROVINCE OF KALINGA FROM THE TABUK CITY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BANTAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 585

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo and Ungab  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 126), re H.B. No. 5741, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE GUINZADAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MAYAG EXTENSION IN BARANGAY MAYAG, MUNICIPALITY OF BAUKO, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE GUINZADAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MAYAG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 729

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Ungab and Dalog

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 127), re H.B. No. 5742, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE LUBON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MABALITE EXTENSION IN BARANGAY MABALITE, MUNICIPALITY OF TADIAN, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE LUBON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MABALITE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 734

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Ungab and Dalog

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 128), re H.B. No. 5743, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE DALANAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – DABBURAB-DALANAO EXTENSION IN BARANGAY BACARRI, MUNICIPALITY OF PARACELIS, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE DALANAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS WELLIE MACLINIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 736

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Ungab and Dalog

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 129), re H.B. No. 5744, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE IN THE CITY OF CANLAON, PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 86 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3445, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT CREATING THE CITY OF CANLAON’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 751

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Ungab and Limkaichong

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, today being a Monday, and pursuant to our Rules, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Party-List PHILRECA, Hon. Presley C. De Jesus, be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Rep. Presley De Jesus of the Party-List PHILRECA is now recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

REP. DE JESUS. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker and my fellow Congressmen and Congresswomen.

Devastated and hampered, yet we remain standing as one.

Mr. Speaker, 225,965 out of 970,464 families in

1,819 barangays across Region III, Region V, Region VII and CAR were severely affected by the impact of the recent typhoon which touched our country. Seventeen people were killed and more than 68 were injured in the southern region of Luzon as Tisoy tore through it, shutting the capital’s main airport, displacing thousands and causing wide-range blackouts.

Honorable Speaker, my dear co-legislators, and guests present here today, good afternoon.

Last Tuesday, December 5, 2019, our country faced and experienced yet another devastating tropical cyclone named “Tisoy,” the Philippines 20th tropical cyclone for 2019. This tropical cyclone brought violent winds, storm surges and heavy to intense rainfall over the southern part of Quezon, Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and the Bicol Region. The Philippines lies near the area in the South Pacific where warm sea water meets the cold front to form a low-pressure area. Geographically located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and in the Pacific Typhoon Belt, the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. With its geographical location comes a great responsibility for the government to enable the country to stand up to the endless forces. Taon-taon, napakaraming buhay ang nasasawi, libo-libong pamilya ang nawawalan ng tahahan, milyong-milyon ang nasisirang pag-aari ng ating mga kababayan, at ilang pangarap na ang natigil, mistulang naglaho, kasama na ng paglayo ng bagyo.

As typhoon Tisoy flooded roads, trampled power poles and badly damaged houses in the affected provinces, 17 transmission lines were intensely affected in Luzon and Visayas. Some of these lines affected our member-consumer-owners of Sorsogon Electric Cooperative I and II in Daraga in Sorsogon, Camarines Sur Electric Cooperative I and III in the Bicol Region, Quezon Electric Cooperative I in the southern part of Quezon and Albay Electric Cooperative in other parts of Bicol. Due to the strong winds that toppled power lines last week, ang ilang rehiyon sa Luzon ay mistulang nabalot sa pansamantalang kadiliman.

Sa pangyayaring ito, ang inyong lingkod, kasama ang ilan kong kasamahan sa power industry, kasama ang mga volunteers at ang magigiting nating mga linemen mula sa iba-ibang electric cooperatives, ay nagtahak noong ika-anim ng Disyembre patungong rehiyon ng Bicol. We have witnessed, first hand, the struggles of our people. The PHILRECA or the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, together with the One Electric Cooperative Network Foundation, Inc. and the National Electrification Administration spearheaded the Power Restoration Rapid Development Task Force or what we call PRRD-TF, the electric cooperatives’ own version of bayanihan. The Warriors of Light have come together in unison to assist and fast-track the restoration of the affected electric cooperatives and

member-consumer-owners in the Bicol Region which appears to be the most affected by the typhoon.

Consisting of more than a hundred Warriors of Light are the electric cooperatives across the island of Luzon, from Rural Electric Cooperatives Association in Region 1, Northeast Luzon Electric Cooperatives Association (NELECA), Central Luzon Electric Cooperatives Association (CLECA) and the Association of Southern Tagalog Electric Cooperatives (ASTECC), which sent their crew to help in the restoration efforts. Ang samahan po, kasama ang mahigit-kumulang na 40 utility vehicles at boom trucks, ay nagsilbing daan upang mapabilis ang pagsasa-ayos, at pagbabalik ng kuryente sa mga kabahayan ng ating mga kababayan sa Timog Katagalugan.

The PRRD Task Force or the Task Force Kapatid is one of the One-Electric Cooperative MCO Movement's main advocacies. It was initially launched in 2002 as a volunteer service whereby the electric cooperatives family act in unison in the form of bayanihan with the aim of mobilizing their personnel and logistics to assist other ECs requiring immediate rehabilitation of distribution lines in times of catastrophe, to be able to speedily restore power service to our member-consumer-owners to lighten up, again, the dark predicament our kababayans are facing. As of December 6, 2019, transmission services in the affected provinces in Calabarzon and Region V have been partially restored: in Batangas, 100 percent; in Quezon, 51 to 90 percent; in Camarines Norte, 91 percent; in Camarines Sur, 50 percent; in Albay and Sorsogon which were affected most, it is only 0.9 percent.

With the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association's mantra, "United we stand, divided we fall," ang ating magiging na mga Warriors of Light ay patuloy na nagkakaisa at nagsasama-sama upang mabigyang tulong ang mga nangangailangan. Despite having to leave their own families behind and the safety of their own homes in order to face the hostile forces of nature and fortuitous events, the Task Force remains strong and united as one to be able to accomplish the cause—that of humanity's existence. Kung maaari lang po, kahit sila ay wala rito, sabay-sabay po nating palakpakan ang ating mga kababayan na patuloy na inaalay ang kanilang buhay at oras upang muling mabigyang-buhay at liwanag ang mga pangarap ng munti nating bansa.

Bago ko po tapusin ang ating talumpati, nais ko pong muling ipaalala ang pagbibigay ng nararapat na pondo para sa Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund or ECERF. Early last month, this Representation delivered a privilege speech before this hall calling for the immediate implementation of the law authorizing the ECERF sapagkat sa pamamagitan ng pondong ito ay mabilis na mapapasa-ayos ang mga nasirang poste ng electric transmission lines sa panahon ng mga kalamidad gaya ng nakaraang bagyo ngunit

hanggang ngayon, hindi pa din naibibigay sa National Electrification Administration ang nasabing pondo. Iyong P750 million po, batas na po pero hanggang ngayon ay wala pa ring linaw.

According to Republic Act No. 11039 or the Electric Cooperative Emergency and Resiliency Fund Act, Section 9 thereof states:

Appropriations.—The sum of P750 million for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund. The P750 million comprising the initial amount of the ECERF shall be immediately released to the NEA Quick Response Fund for proper release to qualified ECs subject to Section 10 of this Act. Thereafter, such amounts necessary for the sustainable implementation of the ECERF shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Para saan po ba ang batas na ipinasa natin kung hindi naman po natin susundin ang nilalaman nito? Inuulit ko po, malinaw na malinaw ang nakasaad sa batas that the P750 million comprising the initial amount of ECERF shall be "immediately released." We call on the appropriate agencies to do its part in releasing the ECERF to the NEA. We need this now more than ever. We should be strong enough to set aside our own reservations and differences to be able to achieve the cause and welfare of our community.

While our country may be divided geographically and our advocacies may be diverse entirely, may we still remember our only race and blood that as Filipinos, we should remain to be the country with patriotism, with the power and hunger to extend help to our people. Let us be the legislators whom our country deserves. They said in the SEA Games, "We win as one." Here, "We electrify as one."

Again, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Thank you so much, Representative De Jesus.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Presley C. De Jesus to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). All right. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Privilege Hour is now suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The session is suspended.

*It was 1:21 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 1:29 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

##### *Continuation*

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to resume the Privilege Hour.

Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the APEC Party-List, Hon. Sergio C. Dagooc, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

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

Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc of Party-List APEC is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DAGOOC

REP. DAGOOC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the honorable Members of the esteemed Chamber, I wish a pleasant afternoon to everyone. I stand before you as a matter of privilege and I request for your indulgence as I recount the events of the past week.

When typhoon Tisoy entered the Philippine area of responsibility approximately a week ago, it was safe to say that it did not take us by surprise. Along with the proper weather forecast, we are better equipped now than we were during the previous strong typhoons that struck us. Various measures are being done by different concerned government agencies to remind Filipinos to maintain safety.

Through the leadership of the National Electrification Administration, along with our 121 electric cooperatives across the country, numerous information drives were disseminated to ensure that the member-consumer-

owners were not just made aware of the impending typhoon but were empowered in their ability to brace for the impact of typhoon Tisoy. However, when it entered, it became a national disaster as it certainly left a wake of destruction. The typhoon with the international name Kammuri vehemently affected our rural electric cooperatives. As the Representative of the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, I speak on behalf of our distribution utilities who have been affected by the ravaging typhoon.

Typhoon Tisoy left a huge disaster aftermath to a number of our facilities. The cost of the damage to the distribution utilities of all the electric cooperatives affected by the typhoon was estimated initially at P300 million as of December 6, 2019. Per report from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the total affected population was 225,964 families to be exact and roughly, there were 970,464 persons and 1,819 barangays across Region III, Region V, Region VII and CAR. Out of the 17 transmission lines of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines affected in Central Luzon and Visayas, five of these lines were in Visayas and they affected the Northern Samar Electric Cooperative, the Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative or ESAMELCO and Southern Leyte Electric Cooperative or SOLECO, with two areas in SAMELCO or Samar Electric Cooperative.

Typhoon Tisoy hammered Northern Samar for almost 10 long hours. The strong winds and heavy rains brought by this super typhoon damaged and destroyed the distribution utilities of the Northern Samar Electric Cooperative or NORSAMELCO, leaving the province in total darkness. On December 4, the Eastern Visayas electric cooperatives sent crews to Northern Samar. They are part of the Power Restoration Deployment Task Force for typhoon Tisoy or what we called Task Force Kapatid or PRRD. This PRRD is a special unit of line workers strategically organized to quicken the pace of power restoration activities in the aftermath of disasters.

The PRRD Task Force is an initiative of the One EC-MCO Network Foundation Inc., a foundation of 121 electric cooperatives and the One EC-MCO Movement in coordination with the National Electrification Administration and the four Party-Lists: RECOBODA, APEC, AKO PADAYON PILIPINO and PHILRECA. The lead organization, Mr. Speaker, in the formation of the task force is our mother association, the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association of the Philippines. The PRRD Task Force is an initiative of the One EC-MCO Network Foundation and the One EC-MCO Movement in coordination with the four party-lists I had mentioned awhile ago.

Northern Samar, Mr. Speaker, under Engineer Oledan, the General Manager of Biliran Electric Cooperative (BILECO), and Engineer Dennis Notarte,



the Technical Services Manager of Leyte IV Electric Cooperative (LEYECO IV) personally accompanied the Region VIII task force which we call the Warriors of Light, as additional manpower to help immediately restore and repair the affected power supply of the Northern Samar area or under the NORSAMELCO.

The bond of brotherhood between electric cooperatives was displayed by the sending of the LEYECO II Warriors of Light to Northern Samar to lend a helping hand to the NORSAMELCO at this point in time. As of December 6, 2019, the transmission services of NGCP have been restored 100 percent for the Eastern Samar and 50 percent only for Northern Samar.

The rehabilitation is taking its toll on our member-consumer-owners who are taking the brunt for the loss of access to electricity. This could have been prevented, Mr. Speaker, if the long-overdue Electric Cooperatives Emergency Resiliency Fund or the ECERF was released under Republic Act No. 11039. I would like to repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the ECERF under Republic Act No. 11039, which had been passed by Congress in 2018, until today is not yet funded. We have been calling attention to this since the time when Mindanao was struck by earthquakes and now, another disastrous event happened in our country across four regions. Until today, the NDRRMC is yet to fund the ECERF with the amount of P750 million.

We have linemen, we have equipment, but we lack materials because electric cooperatives are non-stock, non-profit entities. The funding for the rehabilitation is not a part of the rate that electric cooperatives are charging, unlike private distribution utilities which are allowed by law to charge this kind of expenses, and they are even allowed by law to have a profit to a maximum of 12 percent. It is not the case with electric cooperatives and that is why prior to the enactment of Republic Act No. 11039, the expenditures for this kind of rehabilitation was charged to consumers. That is why we lobbied for the enactment of that law and now that it had been passed in 2018, our hands are still tied because of the lack of materials, and we are being blamed by our politicians, we are being blamed by our local leaders when, in fact, they do not understand that the major cause of the delay in the reenergization program is the problem of the NGCP to immediately restore their transmission lines.

We could not restore our distribution line without first reenergizing the lines of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by the fact that until now, this fund has not yet been released by the NDRRMC. I hope and pray that the leadership of the House will support us in asking for the immediate release of this fund.

Habang nagbibigay ng babala ng pagtataas ng presyo ng mga bilingin sa mga lugar na apektado, nagkukumahog ang mga electric cooperatives sa

paghahanap ng mga materyales na gagamitin doon sa mga coops na pinupuntahan nila pero iyong mga electric cooperatives na pinanggalingan ng mga linemen, ang mga linemen na ito, nasira din ang kanilang mga bahay.

I was a lineman before, Mr. Speaker, and it was my experience that, while my house ay nagiba at na-damage, hindi ko inuuna ang pagre-repair ng bahay namin. Ang inuuna naming mga linemen is to restore power in the areas that we are serving. Kaya sana kung nagawa namin na kalimutan na i-repair muna iyong mga bahay namin at unahin ang kapakanan ng sambayanan ay magawa din ito sana ng Kongreso, ng NDRRMC, at ng Department of Budget and Management kasi may batas na po at wala na pong dahilan upang hindi pondohan ang para sa materyales.

Ano ang gagawin ng mga linemen naman kung wala silang magamit na materyales? Kung nakikita lang ninyo, Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, natutulog kami sa ilalim ng aming mga boom trucks kadalasan pagkatapos ng aming trabaho na mag-rehabilitate ng linya. I am one of those who had been a part of the contingent 170 linemen after typhoon Yolanda struck Tacloban at isang linggo akong natutulog sa ilalim ng boom track namin dahil walang mga bahay na matulugan. Sana ay makita iyon ng ating mga lider at sana ay makita iyon ng mga government agencies concerned.

Again, bilang Kinatawan ng mga electric cooperatives sa Kongreso, ako po ay nananawagan sa ating pamahalaan at sa liderato ng Kongreso na sana po ay pondohan na ninyo ang ECERF under Republic Act No. 11039 para po mapagaan ang buhay ng mga mamamayan nating naapektuhan ng lindol at ng typhoon Tisoy. Wala pong magagawa ang mga linemen kung kulang ang materyales na kanilang kinakailangan para maitayo muli ang mga linya. Naipasa na pati ang batas na iyan dahil alam ng ating mga Mambabatas na ang electric cooperatives, again, I would like to reiterate, have no funds for that because they are non-stock and non-profit agencies, kaya mas mababa iyong singil nila di hamak kaysa sa mga private distribution utilities. In Siargao, for example, the electric cooperative which I manage is only charging P7.85. We are a small island. The economies of scale will tell you that we are supposed to be charging more than what the big utilities are charging pero bakit mababa ang singil namin? Because we are not allowed to profit.

Again and again, this is the second time that we are speaking on behalf of the electric cooperatives for the release of the ECERF. Si Senator Sherwin “Win” Ting Gatchalian po, mayroon siyang mga panawagan o mayroon siyang official statement but with all due respect, Senator Gatchalian, you are barking at the wrong tree. Habang nagbibitiw kayo ng inyong mga pahayag sa aming mga kasamahang kooperatiba,

sila ay tumutugon kung saan sila kailangan. Habang nagbibigay kayo ng babala sa pagtaas ng presyo ng kuryente, sila ay nagkukumahog na pagkasyahin ang kanilang pondo.

Alam ninyo naman, Senator Gatchalian, the electric cooperatives under the EPIRA is a regulated entity at hindi po kami makapag-charge kahit isang sentimo without the approval of the Energy Regulatory Commission. Alam ninyo, napakahaba ng proseso bago kami makapag-charge ng maski isang sentimo, at kaya tinulungan ninyo na maipasa iyong Republic Act No. 11039 ay dahil alam ninyo na walang pondo ang coop, alam ninyo na kailangan pa naming i-file iyan sa ERC which will take us three to four years bago ma-approve. If that is the case, it will also take us three to four years bago ma-rehabilitate iyong mga linya na nasisira ng mga typhoons at iba pang natural calamities.

Kaya nagtataka ako kung bakit ang mga electric cooperatives ang sinasabihan ni Senator Gatchalian na baka itaas nila iyong presyo when in fact, he is aware of that, he being the Chairman of the Committee on Energy sa Senado. Ano iyan pamumulitika, paninira? Hindi po tama iyan. We should tell the truth to the public na ang mga electric cooperatives ay hindi puwedeng mag-charge ng kung ano-ano without the approval of the Energy Regulatory Commission as it needs to undergo a tedious process na kailangan ng mga public hearing at kung ano-ano pa.

Hindi natin kalaban ang mga kooperatiba, Mr. Senator. Itinataya namin ang aming mga buhay— itinataya ng ating mga linemen ang kanilang mga buhay sa kabila ng napakalakas na hangin at malalakas na bagyo. Kahit walang pondo, ang mga magigiting nating mga linemen sa mga kooperatiba ay patuloy na tumutupad sa kanilang mga tungkulin na pagsilbihan ang mga tao, ang mga member–consumer–owners na kanilang nasasakupan.

Senator Gatchalian, ang Representasyong ito, kasama ang power block Representatives, ay makailang-ulit nang isinusulong dito sa Kongreso ang mabilisang pagpapalabas ng P750 million para sa ECERF. Denying the Filipino people of this kind of fund is a blatant disregard of the plight of our people. Denying the Filipino people what they deserve is a disrespect to their humanity and the right to decent living conditions and the right to immediately avail of the convenience of electricity after a calamity. Ang Representasyong ito ay patuloy na nananawagan sa ating pamahalaan, kasama si Senator Gatchalian, na sana tulungan ninyo na lang kami na mailabas ang pondong ito. You are the author of the counterpart bill in the Senate, hindi iyong mga kung ano-anong sinasabi ninyo, kaya tulungan ninyo na lang kami mapalabas ang pondo na ito at kapag nailabas na at hindi namin nagawa iyong trabaho namin, saka mo lang kami pagsasabihan.

As I end my privilege speech, Mr. Speaker, allow

me to once again recognize the bravery of our Warriors of Light who risk their own safety to be able to offer their time and services to those who need it most, and it is during trying times like these that we are reaffirmed of the success of One Electric Cooperative-MCO Movement. This Representation commends the leadership and goodwill of the Leyte and Samar electric cooperatives and all the Warriors of Light who participated in the Task Force Kapatid Program to be in solidarity with the victims of typhoon Tisoy in Samar and Northern Samar area. The Rural Electrification Program is indeed a noble path as its goal of sustainable rural development is translated into concrete action, as electric cooperatives transform and nurture communities with them at the forefront of leading or lending support to our countrymen. Nakakataba po ng puso, Mr. Speaker, na ang pagpapailaw sa mga kanayunan ay nagpapabuklod sa ating mga kababayan, lalo na sa oras ng sakuna.

Sa mga biktima po ng bagyong Tisoy, hindi kayo nag-iisa. Kung sa SEA Games po ay mayroong #WeWinAsOne, tayo naman po ay naninindigan na We Will Energize and Restore the Devastated Power Line as One EC-MCO Movement. Mabuhay po ang mga linemen at mga Pilipinong patuloy po na bumabangon sa kabila ng unos at paghihirap.

Muli, magandang hapon po sa ating lahat at nawa ay patuloy tayong ilayo ng Panginoong Maykapal sa anumang panganib at sakuna. Patnubayan po tayong lahat ng Diyos.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Thank you so much, Representative Dagooc, for that privilege speech which will be referred to the appropriate committee. The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the SAGIP Party-List, Deputy Speaker Rodante D. Marcoleta, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Okay.

Deputy Speaker Marcoleta is now recognized for his interpellation.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). You are now recognized.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

May I know if the good Gentleman from APEC

Party-List is still able to accommodate a few questions?

REP. DAGOOC. It is an honor to be interpellated by Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Salamat po. First of all, I would like to commiserate with the electrical cooperatives in this country for having experienced the destruction of their installations and other equipment associated with their industry. I would like to know if the electric cooperatives in this country generally know that our country is located in the Northwest Pacific basin in which about 75 typhoons come from. Do you know that fact, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAGOOC. We are aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. In the Philippines, as you know, regularly, our country is visited by something like 20 typhoons, and about seven of them are relatively strong. Do you also know that?

REP. DAGOOC. We are aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. And because you know the environmental context by which electrical cooperatives operate, particularly the fact that the country is in the direct hit of the Pacific Ocean, is it not correct to assume that industries with activities that are being done or manifested outdoors are supposed to prepare for these eventualities? Meaning to say, it is not surprising or it is not strange that industries that operate outdoors are visited by negative externalities. Am I correct?

REP. DAGOOC. You are correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Therefore, like the construction industry, contractors are also exposed to the elements and sometimes their projects are affected by strong typhoons and other disasters that strike this nation. Similarly, electric cooperatives are also in the same position.

REP. DAGOOC. We are not 100 percent under the same situation, Mr. Speaker, because if we are going to embed our lines, it will cost the consumers 11 times the rate that we are charging now. That is why we are experimenting on Batanes, since the lines there in Batanes are already embedded, but the project cost is not charged to the consumer because that is under the JICA.

So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, we

have already made a cost benefit analysis on that a long time ago, but the Filipino people cannot afford the cost of underground cable.

REP. MARCOLETA. The main point I would like to drive at, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is that typhoons are not strange to you, that typhoons are ordinary happenstance that comes to the country and so, you must prepare for them. You have to consider what they call calculated elements of risk and as a businessman, you need to plan for this. It is not, I think, very good if you will have to rely on the government for all the needs of your electric cooperatives because the government is also trying to take care of the other constituencies. Communities need to be resilient in their own ways since the government has limited resources.

There is a commercial element in your work and in what you are trying to do in the service of our people. Electric cooperatives are private enterprises and there is business in it. There is a corporate element in this and so, as businessmen, you should have prepared for the eventualities because typhoons will be coming, typhoons will not go anywhere and so, the consumers expect that you will also strengthen your capability and not fully rely on how the government can help you. Is that correct?

REP. DAGOOC. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, the only way that we can avoid the devastation on the lines everytime there are typhoons or even earthquakes, is to adapt the underground cable methodology; however, as I have said a while ago, it is very expensive.

Now, in the case of an open distribution system, there are a lot of innovations already that we have done or we have applied, for example, what we call “double down guy.” So, ang ibig sabihin niyan, Mr. Speaker, dinadamihan namin iyong mga bunting, then, we are also replacing the wooden poles with concrete or steel structures. Again, the problem is that we have a lot of vegetation in the areas that we are serving because electric cooperatives are basically serving communities in the countryside, sa mga liblib na lugar po at hindi natin puwedeng putulin iyong mga puno ng niyog at mga prutas.

Everytime na matutumba iyong mga niyog, everytime na matutumba iyong mga kahoy, sa linya po pupunta iyon and that will also cause the destruction of the lines. That is why in the Seventeenth Congress, there was already a law passed to address this vegetation problem because 80 percent of the lines damaged during typhoons are caused by the falling coconut and other trees on the electric lines. May batas na po and the IRR for which is now being prepared by the Department of Energy para maputol iyong mga kahoy, and we are hoping that with the implementation of that law,

mababawasan po ang mga linya na nasisira during a typhoon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, you just identified the problems that are associated with your industry. You are correct that there are problems and in any industry, there are problems to overcome, but these are not supposed to be imposed upon the government to absolve you. You are in the business sector at nagkataon lang na you are serving even the remotest of our population and our people are grateful for that.

You know beforehand, before setting up these facilities and before you chose to go into this kind of industry, the problems associated with this industry and so, if you know these problems, you must have prepared for these problems. You know how to deal with them, and I would like to believe that you even know how to solve them, and I would not believe that it is always the government that should come into your succor. I think this is an industry that also needs to develop internally, to strengthen your ranks to serve fully and better the population that depends on your services. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAGOOC. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, I beg to disagree that non-stock, non-profit electric cooperatives are commercial in nature. I would like to bring to the attention of the Gentleman the origin why rural electric cooperatives were born.

In 1969, under Republic Act No. 6038, the National Electrification Administration was created. During that time, only the big cities have electricity and there was no electricity in the countryside as only 10 percent of the whole country has been electrified. With that, the government embarked on a rural electrification program and with electricity in the countryside, the government believed it can attract investors thereto and spin economic activities. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, the rural electrification program is a government program. Under Republic Act No. 6038, amended by Presidential Decree No. 269, further amended by Presidential Decree No. 1645, and further amended by Republic Act No. 10531 in 2013, it has been reiterated that the rural electrification program is a government program in order to attain sustainable rural development using electric cooperatives as a vehicle.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, parang DPWH lang ang trabaho namin dito na nag-i-implement ng programa ng gobyerno na pang elektripikasyon, kaya po subsidy ang ginagamit sa mga sitios doon sa mga areas because the government knows that electric cooperatives are only its vehicle. We are not operating commercially and that can be attested by the Energy Regulatory Commission because it is the one approving our rates which do not include profit, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I am a little bit confused. Are you saying that the electric cooperatives are not making money?

REP. DAGOOC. It is not making money, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, and as I had said, we can ask the Energy Regulatory Commission.

I will give an example, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker. I am managing two electric cooperatives, but I waived my salary in the other electric cooperative. Part of the computation of the rate is the salary of the workforce, the salary of the personnel, and the amount of the salary of the personnel is not determined by the electric cooperative itself but it is determined by the National Electrification Administration. Ngayon, hindi ko tinanggap iyong sahod sa kabilang coop and so, that will become savings. Halimbawa, mayroon kang 100 ...

REP. MARCOLETA. I am asking a question in general—are electric cooperatives not making money? I think they are all viable because if they are not viable industries, they should have closed shop a long time ago.

REP. DAGOOC. Ang taripa po, Mr. Speaker,...

REP. MARCOLETA. The point that I am trying to drive at, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a business. As a matter of fact, this business is being led by private citizens. They are not public officials, is it not?

REP. DAGOOC. They are not public officials but they are elected by the owners of the cooperative.

REP. MARCOLETA. If they were elected by their respective cooperatives, that does not mean that they are public officials. What we are saying is, this is a private initiative that is partnered with the government's intention to electrify our remotest localities and villages, but there is no reason to complain. This is the main point—there is no reason to complain because you chose to partner with the government and this is something that is very laudable on your part.

The point that we are trying to show here is that this is an endeavor, in part, of the government. Considering that disasters are visiting our country almost regularly, the only reason for this Representation to ask this question is this—the cooperatives must be prepared. They must have plans for contingencies because you are not a stranger to environment-related disasters that visit our country. So, when the government should be able to help you in some cases, it is not always the rule that you should always look for the government for all the problems that plague the industry.

This is the only point, Mr. Speaker, and I would like

to thank the Gentleman for being able to shed light on some of the issues that he undertook this afternoon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, dear colleague.

REP. DAGOOC. Mr. Speaker, before I end, I would just like to reiterate that our rate does not include those expenses. That is why this law is there in order to solve a problem like this. Hindi naman po totoo na lahat ay hinihingi namin sa gobyerno. It is very specific na ang hinihingi lang namin sa gobyerno is to fund what had been passed in the law. Nasa batas na po iyon, and it has been recognized by the government na it is the duty of the government to fund that. That is why there is a law on that. Iyon lang po ang hinahanap namin.

To reiterate, we are not operating a business. We are operating in a cash flow methodology. We can ask the Energy Regulatory Commission to attest to that statement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Sergio Dagooc to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The said privilege speech is now referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez, Deputy Speaker Vilma Santos-Recto and Reps. Alfred Vargas, John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto and Lucy Torres-Gomez from the Philippine Movie Press Club headed by Mr. Sandy Mariano, with Ms. Annabel Rama and Mr. Jun Lalin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). They are also the guests of Cong. Precious Hipolito Castelo. To all the members of the Philippine Movie Press Club, its officers and officials, and Ms. Annabelle Rama, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. John Reynald M. Tiangco, Representative from the Lone District of Navotas City. They are students from

the Tanza Elementary School and Wawa Elementary School.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). To all the guests of Congressman Tiangco, the students of Tanza Elementary School and Wawa Elementary School, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Arnold “Noli” D. Celeste, Representative from the First District of Pangasinan. They are Mr. Butch Camero, Mr. Mark Anthony De Castro, Ms. Sonia Fernandez, Ms. Elsa Dela Cruz, Mr. Edgar Villareal, Mr. Astro Kenneth Lomibao, Ms. Cecille Cardaño, Ms. Chelsea Shannan Cardinal and Mr. Ceferino Trigo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). To all the guests of Cong. Arnold “Noli” Celeste from Bolinao, Pangasinan, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Gentleman from the Second District of Oriental Mindoro, Hon. Alfonso V. Umali Jr., be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Congressman Boy Umali from the Second District of Mindoro Oriental is now recognized for his privilege speech.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. UMALI (A.)

REP. UMALI (A.). Mr. Speaker, and honorable Members of the House of Representatives, good afternoon.

I stand before you with an urgent concern on the DSWD’s utilization of AICS fund. Recently, in December 3, 2019, typhoon Tisoy hit and devastated the Province of Oriental Mindoro and left hundreds of millions of damages in agriculture and housing and sadly, even killed five lives. This kind of catastrophic natural disaster and calamity is not unprecedented. It may be recalled that typhoons Nona and Nina, among others, also affected thousands of Oriental Mindoreños in December 2015 and 2016, respectively. This, nonetheless, did not shake the trust and faith of our people to God and to the government. Resilience became their mantra.

Despite the strong character of our people, as their Representative in this noble hall, I believe that it is my duty to ensure that my fellow Mindoreños will

immediately recover from these misfortunes. It is in these trying times that the services and assistance of the DSWD are needed the most, especially its Assistance for Individuals in Crisis Situation or AICS. I am here today to refer to this august Body my experience with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Regional Office of MIMAROPA and its field office in Oriental Mindoro.

As legislators, we are mandated to determine and allocate funds of the government; and as Representatives of our constituencies, we are bound to ensure that the funds are aptly distributed. It is also our duty to know and fully understand the needs of our people and so do we. We appropriate funds based on what we know and understand through the AICS funding. I thought that I am assured that whenever the people's needs of this magnitude arise, we have the DSWD services to rely on.

Honorable Speaker and Members of the Eighteenth Congress, we all know that prioritization is part and parcel of budgeting. In the same vein, prioritization in spending or utilizing such cash or funds allocated, specifically for our respective constituencies, is given to our district offices; however, that is not the case in the DSWD-MIMAROPA cluster.

At the onset of my assumption of office, in a meeting held or set, last August 23, it was agreed upon that the DSWD will submit a monthly report of the utilization of the AICS fund. However, to date, and despite our requests, not a single valid report was submitted to my office. Worse, to my dismay, upon inquiry, this Representation was informed that only P2.5 million of AICS fund is left for my constituency as most of the funds had already been utilized even before this tragedy came. These are funds which, if utilized—in accordance with our projections and prioritization based on historical data and on my personal knowledge as the Governor of the Province of Mindoro for nine long years, knowing fully well that the province has the highest risk of being hit by destructive calamities during the last quarter of the year, therefore, I implore this august Body, through the honorable Speaker, to keenly remind the DSWD of its duties, especially the DSWD Regional Office in MIMAROPA, and to never ever disrespect or disregard the wisdom of the Members of the House of Representatives, which can lead to the detriment of the welfare of the people who we all serve. Notwithstanding that, to be clear, I am making this privilege speech not to antagonize nor undermine the relationship that the Congress has with the DSWD but I am doing this to express my frustration regarding this very exasperating incident, and for the institution to improve their system of providing assistance and utilization of their funds.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Thank you, Representative Boy Umali.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Alfonso Umali Jr. to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, may I request that the Gentleman from the Third District of Camarines Sur, Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Gentleman from the Third District of Camarines Sur, Hon. Gabriel Bordado Jr., is now recognized for his privilege speech.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BORDADO

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, three years after typhoon Nina roughed up the Bicol Region, another weather disturbance with almost the same intensity barged in six days ago. Locally named typhoon Tisoy, it once again pummeled the Bicol Region, aside from battering Southern Luzon and some parts of the Visayas, generating four landfalls and leaving an extensive and expansive swath of destruction in its wake. The typhoon, Mr. Speaker, even affected the ongoing Southeast Asian Games as heavy rains struck Metro Manila and adjoining areas.

Mr. Speaker, the two top officials of the land—Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Vice Pres. Leni Gerona Robredo who hails from Naga, Bicol's premier city—had visited some of the devastated areas in our region.

Yet, at this stage, Mr. Speaker, thousands of our countrymen are still reeling from the deleterious effects of typhoon Tisoy, particularly the farmers who, in the past months, had to grapple with veritable storms of entirely different dimensions.

Mr. Speaker, the distribution of relief goods has been going on for days. Just like in the earthquake-stricken provinces in Mindanao, food, clothing and other basic necessities are badly needed by the typhoon victims. Electricity on the other hand is gradually being restored. I am thanking, Mr. Speaker, the so-called Electric Power bloc in the House for urging the government to release the Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund or the ECERF, as per Republic Act No. 11039, which aims to assist electric cooperatives affected by

natural disasters to restore and rehabilitate damaged infrastructures and, Mr. Speaker, for deploying special task forces to the typhoon-affected provinces to ensure the immediate restoration of power supply.

Mr. Speaker, I also commend the local government units in the typhoon-ravaged areas for pursuing, without let-up, pre-disaster preparations in order to preclude the loss of lives and properties. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and other national government agencies, including the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration, otherwise known as PAG-ASA, did their share in mitigating the damage wrought by typhoon Tisoy.

Mr. Speaker, what we could not comprehend, however, was why Bicol, particularly the Province of Camarines Sur, was virtually cut off from the rest of the world for almost 12 hours. Mr. Speaker, there ought to be a communication system in place when the two current telecommunication groups are out of order, especially during calamities.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Gabriel Bordado to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The said privilege speech is referred to the appropriate committee.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move to extend the Privilege Hour for one more hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion to extend the Privilege Hour. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Lady from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Representative Cullamat is now recognized. Go ahead.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CULLAMAT

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, sa aking mga kasamahan, magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

G. Ispiker, nagpapatuloy, laganap at walang-habas ang paninira laban sa mga kritiko ng maling pamamalakad ng pamahalaan. Nagpapatuloy, laganap at walang-habas ang pandarahas sa mga kritiko ng maling pamamaraan ng pamahalaan. Nagpapatuloy, laganap at walang-habas ang pagpaslang sa mga kritiko ng maling pamamalakad ng pamahalaan. Nagpapatuloy, laganap at walang-habas ang klima ng di-pagkakarusa ng mga salarin ng paglabag sa mga karapatang pantao. Walang salarin ang dinadampot, walang salarin ang kinakasuhan at walang salarin ang pinagbabayad ng kanilang paglabag sa karapatang pantao.

G. Ispiker, ito ang kasalukuyang kalagayan ng karapatang pantao sa bansa. Ito ang kalagayang ipinagdiriwang ng pamahalaan, ang pagdiriwang ng pamahalaan na kinakatatampukan ng paglalabas ng mga press releases na pumupuri sa artipisyal na kapayapaan at iba pang gimik na pa-pogi lamang sa administrasyon.

G. Ispiker, ang mga katutubong Pilipino na naging karaniwang biktima ng lahat ng uri ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao, hindi ipinagdiriwang ang pagdiriwang na araw ng karapatang pantao; ito ay ginugunita. Habang laganap ang paninira, pandarahas at pagpaslang ng mga kritiko ng pamahalaan at lumalabang mamamayan, walang dahilan upang ipagdiwang ang araw na ito ng karapatang pantao. Habang nanatili ang pag-iral ng lumalalang impunity o di-pagkarusa ng mga salarin sa lumalalang kaso ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao, walang dahilan upang ipagdiwang itong Pandaigdigang Araw ng Karapatang Pantao.

G. Ispiker, dapat bang magdiwang kung ang mga tanggapan ng mga ligal na samahang kritiko ng pamahalaan ay pinapasok at tinatamnan ng mga bala at bomba ng mga mismong ahente ng pamahalaan? May dahilan ba upang magsaya kung patuloy ang pag-ulan ng mga bomba at bala sa mga komunidad ng Negros, Bukidnon at kabuuan ng Mindanao? Makapagbibigay ka ba ng ngiti o tawa kung patuloy ang pagbaha ng dugo ng mga katutubo, magsasaka at maralitang Pilipino sa kanayunan dahil sa malawakang militarisasyon at batas militar na nagsilbi lamang upang ibayuhin ang lumalalang kultura ng impunity?

G. Ispiker, habang patuloy ninyong pinapatay ang aming hanay, hindi namin kailanman ipagdiriwang ang araw na ito ng karapatang pantao. Gugunitain namin ito sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay karangalan sa mga tagapagtanggol at biktima ng paglabag ng karapatang pantao at gayundin, sa pamamagitan ng pagpapaigting ng panawagan at laban upang dalhin sa hustisya ang mga salarin at mawakasan ang lumalalang kultura ng impunity.

G. Ispiker, ito lamang ang mararapat na turing

ng Pandaigdigang Araw ng Karapatang Pantao: ang paggunita sa mga biktima at ibayong pag-alma sa malawakang paglabag sa karapatang pantao. G. Ispiker, nitong mga nakaraang linggo lamang ay nagmistulang piyesta ang mga pulis, militar at iba pang ahensiya ng pamahalaan sa paglusob sa mga tanggapan ng mga ligal na samahang kritiko ng pamahalaan at sa pagtatanim ng mga bala at bomba dito. Dala-dala nila ang search warrant na maramihan at buong kademonyohang inilabas ng pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ni Quezon City RTC Executive Judge Cecilyn Burgos Villabert. Koordinado at sistematiko nilang pinaglulusob ang mga tanggapan ng BAYAN MUNA, BAYAN, Kilusang Mayo Uno, KARAPATAN, GABRIELA, National Federation of Sugar Workers, Negros Island Health Integrated Program sa Bacolod at Manila. Hindi din nila pinaligtas ang mga mapayapang tahanan ng mga lider ng mga ligal na samahang ito. Hindi bababa sa 59 indibidwal ang pinagdadampot dito at pinagsasampahan nang gawa-gawang kaso.

G. Ispiker, walang pinipili ang mga halimaw ng pamahalaan na binibiktima nila. Walang ligtas sa kanilang kahayupan, kahit pa ikaw ay ligal na mamamayan. Nitong October, 468 indibidwal sa Caraga at hilagang Mindanao ang sinampahan ng mga gawa-gawang kasong kidnapping, serious illegal detention, grave threat, grave coercion, robbery with force upon things, intimidation and destructive arson. Ang tanging kasalanan nila ay ang pumuna sa maling sistema ng pamahalaan at lumaban para sa kanilang karapatan. G. Ispiker, pabrika ng arrest at search warrant ang ating mga korte, lalo na ang Quezon City Branch 89 ni Cecilyn Burgos Villabert. Pakyaw na ang pagsasampa ng mga gawa-gawang kaso laban sa mga katutubo at karaniwang mamamayang lumalaban. Walang ligtas sa kahayupan ng pamahalaan kahit pa ikaw ay ligal na mamamayan. Nakakalungkot at nakakapanginig ng galit na armas ng mga military at pulis ng pamahalaan ang batas at korte, armas nila laban sa ligal at maliit na katutubo at mamamayan.

G. Ispiker, sa katimugang Mindanao naman ay sistematikong ipinapasara ng pamahalaan ang mga paaralang Lumad. Ang tanging kasalanan ng mga paaralang ito ay ang bigyan ng edukasyon at wakasan ang kamangmangan ng mga katutubo, na siya namang malakas na armas nila laban sa pagsasamantala sa mga dambuhalang trosohan at minahan na kumakamkam at sumisira sa ating katutubong lupain at kapaligiran. Sa huling bilang ay 250 katutubong paaralan ang naipasara, 54 dito ay sa Caraga, habang nanatili sa paligid ang mga minahan at laging nakaambang sumunggab at kumamkam sa mga katutubong lupain.

G. Ispiker, hindi lamang ang mga katutubong lupain pero maging ang mga katutubong paaralan ay hindi ligtas sa kanilang kahayupan.

Sa paparaming bilang ng mga pinapaslang ng mga pulis, militar at mga ahente nila sa Mindanao, Negros at mga kanayunan, idinagdag kamakailan lamang ang 7 menor de edad sa Midsayap, Cotabato na walang awang pinagbabaril. Noong December 2, ang mag-asawang Rolando at Josephine Egtob ang pinaslang sa Butuan. Ang mag-asawa ay kasapi ng ligal na samahang UMAN pero pinalabas ng mga pulis at militar na kasapi sila ng NPA matapos nilang paslangin. Nitong December 5 lamang ay binaril ang lider-magsasaka at taga-pangulo ng ANAKPAWIS na si Gaudencio “Jun-jun” Paclawona sa Tandag City. Pinapalayas naman ang mga Aeta sa kanilang katutubong lupain sa Tarlac at Pampanga upang bigyan daan ang pagtitindig sa Clark Green City. Walang ligtas ang ligal na mamamayan sa kahayupan ng pamahalaan at sa mga ahenteng pulis at militar nito.

Sa Pandaigdigang Araw ng Karapatang Pantao, gugunitain namin ito sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay karangalan sa mga tagapagtanggol at mga biktima ng karapatang pantao at gayundin, sa pamamagitan ng pagpapaigting ng panawagan at laban upang dalhin sa hustisya ang mga salarin at mawakasan ang lumalalang kultura ng impunity.

G. Ispiker, itigil ang pagsampa nang gawa-gawang kaso, palayain ang lahat ng bilanggong pulitikal, ibalik ang usapang pangkapayapaan sa GRP at NDFP at iginalang ang mga nalagdaang kasunduan ng GRP at NDFP sa nagdaang mga taon.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker, at magandang hapon ulit sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Eufemia Cullamat to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the referral of this privilege speech to the Committee on Rules. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Lady from the Party-List BAGONG HENERASYON, Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy of the Party-List BAGONG HENERASYON, you are now recognized for your privilege speech.



## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. HERRERA-DY

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My dear colleagues and guests in the gallery, good afternoon.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “An unjust law, is no law at all.” By extension, I dare say, “An unjust contract is no contract at all.” I speak of contracts that are overly one-sided and extend to the level of an intolerable loss of our sovereignty. I refer, of course, to the 1997 water concession agreements entered into with the Manila Water Company and Maynilad. These contracts are bursting with provisions of numerous illegalities and excessive misinterpretations, all to the detriment of the Filipino people. Add to this, these never passed through the scrutiny of Congress. These were fundamentally wrong to begin with. Sinuko na ng MWSS ang pagiging public utility doon sa concession agreements.

It is high time that we truly enforce accountability to those responsible for defrauding the consumers for the benefit of private interests. Allow me to describe these provisions for you.

First, to consider the concessionaires as mere agents of MWSS is by all means a farce. These companies are public utilities, no ifs or buts about it. *(No audio feed)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). MWSS ang pinag-uusapan natin. Bakit kuryente ang nawawala?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Hello.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Ayan, mayroon na.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Okay na? *(No audio feed again)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Hello—sorry for the interruption.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Okay na po ba?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). You may now proceed, Representative Herrera-Dy.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Naalala ko tuloy noong 2011 noong nag-privilege speech ako, ang daming gustong pumigil sa akin magsalita. Baka mamaya—natakot ako. Ngayon naman, napipigilan po ako ulit pero mikropono na po ang pinapatay sa akin.

Anyway, ulitin ko po. First, to consider that these

concessionaires are mere agents of MWSS is, by all means, a farce.

These companies are public utilities, no ifs or no buts about it. For those who insist on their status as agents of the MWSS, you are responsible for allowing these companies to pass on “business expenses” and corporate income taxes, that they should rightfully be paying, to all the consumers. These include the outlandish and ridiculous provisions in the concession agreements to pass on to the consumers all legal and arbitration expenses.

In 2018 alone, these two concessionaires sought to pass these on to the consumers by increasing the rates to cover corporate expenses such as donations, travel expenses, sports expenses, legal and arbitration fees and corporate income taxes. *Gastos nila pero taong-bayan ang magbabayad?* Through this same “agency treatment,” these companies have abused the system even further, determining that the maximum 12 percent limit rate of return imposed on public utilities does not apply to them as they are “mere agents.” No wonder kaya skyrocket na po ang kinikita nila.

Ito pong resolusyon na hawak ko, Resolution No. 04006-CA na na-issue ng regulatory office ng MWSS, ang tanging papel na nagsasabi na hindi sila public utility kaya sinasabi nila na sila ay “mere agents.” Kagagawan lang po ito ng isang technical working group na sila-sila rin ang komposisyon nito. Kaya kayang-kaya po nating i-insist at i-demand na sila ay public utility companies. This alone is a preposterous disservice to the country! However, as it is often said on TV shopping, “But wait, there’s more!”

The government has bent over backwards in favor of these companies. The so-called “innovation” of the MWSS-Regulatory Office in its interpretation of the concession agreements allowed the concessionaires to collect fees via the water tariff capital investment plans and programs that have not yet been implemented or for those that had already been abandoned. They were allowed to bill consumers for projects that, to this day, have yet to be fully implemented. To name only a few: the Wawa Dam which is a P732 million project, the Laguna Lake Project which is a P100 million project, the Laiban Dam Project which is a P45.3 billion project, the Pinugay Sewerage Treatment Project for P600 million, the Angat Water Transmission Improvement Project for P5.4 billion and the Earthquake Contingency Project for P4.130 billion.

For these six projects alone, a total of P56.262 billion have been billed in advance from the Filipino people. I ask, where are these projects today? Why is it that the benefits from these projects have not been felt by the Filipino people? How is it that for this year alone, our own people suffered from a massive systematic water shortage that disrupted the National Capital Region water supply?

Let us recap, shall we? These companies charge the consumers various business expenses and have the people pay for projects, some of which were already abandoned or are yet to be fully implemented, and they want the government to pay P10 billion for their arbitration award? Have they performed their duties and responsibilities from the concession agreements they consider sacred? I use this term lightly as they themselves do not seem to respect the concession agreements they anchored their claims on. The very agreements themselves all point to the fact that they are public utilities and the only semblance of them being an agency is to allow them to be empowered agents of the MWSS to apply for the exercise of governmental functions such as easement, eminent domain and right-of-way. Existing law, jurisprudence and overall basic common sense all point to the conclusion that water distribution and provision of sewerage services to the general public are granted by the concession agreements from the MWSS as the original public utility from its legislative charter. So, if the MWSS is a public utility and it enters into concession agreements with the two companies, then all of a sudden, they are not public utilities themselves?

But let us focus on the other issues for now. After all, they want the government to uphold their concession agreements. What has happened to the requirement of the very same concession agreements for these companies to provide proper sewerage and sanitation systems? Where are the international standard piping systems that they are supposed to have created? Ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues, these concessionaires or these companies are still using the drainage systems of the DPWH. These drains are ill-suited for sewerage and sanitation and once the annual rains come, sewage is included in the floodwaters, increasing the spread of diseases such as leptospirosis, dengue, dysentery, among others, as well as causing the spread of toxic elements that are hazardous to the public.

When we experience services that we are not satisfied with, what do we do? As consumers, we can choose not to patronize these establishments. Kapag hindi tayo masasaya sa serbisyo, ano ang ginagawa natin? Even with more than a decade to go under their current agreements, the MWSS did the unthinkable and in 2014, it extended these agreements by an additional 15 years, thus, to expire in 2037.

So again, let us recap. We paid their corporate income taxes and other business expenses in advance for projects that are nonexistent or abandoned, looked the other way when they failed to provide sewerage and sanitation systems, and extended their contracts even though the expiry date is so far away. Are we going to stand by and allow this massive duping of the Filipino people?

“Beware the fury of a patient man” as John Dryden

says. In this case, beware that of a patient woman. These onerous contracts have been the subject of my own research and numerous calls for investigation close to a decade ago. I am truly thankful that today, President Duterte himself has seen this issue and has not only pledged to act accordingly, but will hold these companies accountable. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for acknowledging that these widespread actions can no longer be tolerated.

Now, I call on my fellow legislators here in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, let us expose these actions for what they are—a widespread swindling of the Filipino people and the government. Let us all unite and act for the benefit of our people, our constituents who elected us to serve. Allow me to leave you with these words of Anatole France, “Justice is the means by which established injustices are sanctioned.” I repeat, “Justice is the means by which established injustices are sanctioned.” Let us all act to correct these injustices of the past once and for all.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity—that first opportunity was on September 2011 and I stand here years later, asking the same thing, “let us all act and this is my call for action to my colleagues.”

Marami pong salamat and may God continue to bless the Philippines and the Filipino people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Ah, referral. Okay.

REP. ANDAYA. I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Congressman Gaité, you are recognized for your interpellation.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, kagalang-galang na Ispiker. Pahihintulan ba ng ating tagapagsalita, ng ating kagalang-galang na Congresswoman Herrera-Dy, na kung mayroon bang ilang katanungan hinggil sa privilege speech.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Opo.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po. Sa mga nakaraang araw, talagang nakakabahala ang balitang lumabas bunga ng Permanent Arbitral Tribunal sa Singapore sa binabanggit na malaking kabayaran ang

kailangan daw o may malaking obligasyon ang ating gobyerno hinggil sa naging desisyon ng Tribunal na ito sa usapin ng penalties regarding the rate rebasing of the concessionaires under the MWSS. Tama po ba iyan, kagalang-galang na Kinatawan?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, kaya po sila tumakbo sa arbitration ay hindi po sila napayagan mag-increase ng presyo based on the rate rebasing dahil nakita ng MWSS, at dahil din sa imbestigasyon natin sa Kongreso, na hindi nararapat ang increase ng kanilang rates during that time dahil marami silang nakolekta mula sa taumbayan para sa mga proyekto na hindi pa nagagawa. Kaya we are holding them accountable at i-report sa atin kung nasaan na ba iyong mga perang ibinayad ng mga consumers. So, dahil diyan, hindi natin sila pinayagan ng rate rebasing, na mag-increase sila ng presyo, at dahil hindi sila pinayagan, tumakbo sila doon sa Court of Arbitration.

Lagi po nilang panakot ito. Mula pa po noong 2003 na rate rebasing, laging panakot ito ng mga concessionaires, “kapag hindi ninyo payagan kami mag-increase, tatakbo kami sa arbitration.” Hanggang sa, finally, noong huli, nanindigan ang MWSS-RO na hindi sila pinayagan mag-increase at tinotoo nga nila ang banta at tumakbo sila sa Court of Arbitration at doon sinabi nila na ang laki daw ng lugi nila dahil hindi sila pinayagan mag-increase ng presyo. Pero kung titingnan natin ang kanilang year-end statements, financial statements, napakalaki naman ng kinita ng dalawang bilyonaryong kompanyang ito at ang price per share nila sa Philippine Stock Exchange had increased tremendously, kaya hindi ko nakikita kung paano sila nalugi doon sa hindi pag-increase ng presyo. Kaya hindi ko nakikitang napag-aralang mabuti ito ng Arbitration Court at sa palagay ko ay hindi tiningnan ang mga libro nila sa claim na sila ay nalulugi dahil hindi sila nakapagtaas ng presyo ng tubig.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Congresswoman, sa inyong malinaw na pagpapaliwanag hinggil sa kung ano ba iyong naging partikular na usapin na hinarap, at hindi lang ang gobyerno pero sa totoo lang, ito ay may epekto sa lahat ng mga mamamayang Pilipino. Kung maa-award iyong sinasabing penalties ng ini-impose ng Permanent Tribunal na ito, malaking kasingilan ang magaganap at obviously, ang final impact niyan ay doon sa consumers.

Katulad ng nabanggit ninyo, iyong threat na ito, na pinaboran ang Manila Water, ay ipapasa normally iyan sa consumers. Kaya po ang isang katanungan ko, bakit ho ba kailangan dito sa ganitong mga disputes arising from the interpretation or concerns regarding the concessionaire agreements, which were signed in 1997—matagal na pala ano, 1997—by virtue of Republic

Act No. 8041 or the Water Crisis Act of 1995, bakit kailangan international tribunal dahil ang pagkaintindi ko, ang MWSS o ang water concessionaire agreements ay dito ginawa sa ating bansa sa Pilipinas? Although totoo rin na mayroong multinational corporation na partner as required by the concessionaire agreements, but they retained a minority in terms of investments at ang pagkaintindi ko rin ay nag-a-apply pa rin iyong 60-40 equity limitation sa foreign ownership.

Pero kung gayon, kung minority lang, bakit ho kaya pinahihintulutan na iyong usapin na ito, ang tinatawag na korporasyong Manila Water and even the Maynilad ay rehistrado sa SEC dito sa ating bansa and yet, kapag may mga usapin o dispute, bakit ho, sa tingin ninyo, dinadala ito sa international tribunal para pagpasyahan ang mga bagay na, sa tingin ng Kinatawang ito, ay dapat sa ating sistema ng korte o sa ating judicial system ang pagpapasya sa mga usapin na iyan. Ano po ang tingin ng kagalang-galang na Kinatawan, Mr. Speaker?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, iyon nga po—kaya po ako nagsaliksik, gumawa ng imbestigasyon mula pa po noong 2011, noong 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, dahil nakita ko nga na isang probisyon ito ng concession agreement na hindi nararapat at hindi tama. Ang isa nga diyan, sabi ko, hindi kasi ito dumaan sa Kongreso, because they always claim not to be public utility companies, they claimed that they are just mere agents. So, pakiramdam nila hindi na sila kailangan dumaan sa Kongreso. Kaya nga, from the very beginning it was a fundamentally wrong contract because it did not pass through the scrutiny of Congress. That is number one. Kaya nga pinag-aaralan namin baka dapat—baka *ab initio* na ang kontratang ito to begin with, kasi hindi siya dumaan sa kahit anong scrutiny ng Kongreso. But this is a public utility company, it should have passed through us. And the concession agreement, sinuko ng MWSS iyong kanilang pagiging public utility doon sa concession eh, di ba, ipinasa niya sa concession agreement. Kaya sinasabi natin hindi tama ito. That is why we have been questioning some provisions of the concession agreement from the very, very beginning. Unfortunately, no one is listening. Way back in 2010, nandito rin po ako, nagsasalita din po ako, pero wala rin pong nakikinig. Pero, ngayon, si Pangulong Duterte na mismo ang nakadiskubre nito, kaya, nagpapasalamat ako talaga sa ating Pangulo dahil napakalakas po ng political will niya talaga na labanan ang malalaking kumpanyang ito na matagal na pong pinadurugo ang ating mga mamamayang Pilipino.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po.

Sapagkat talagang tama po naman ang obserbasyon ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan, sapagkat alam natin na marami talagang tinatawag na “onerous provisions” iyong concession agreement. At kung

mamarapatin ni Congresswoman Herrera-Dy, mayroon rin po kaming ano take riyang noong panahon na ito ay pina-privatized.

Konting kuwento lang, way back in 1995, when the supposed water crisis was developing, nagkaroon din ng El Niño noong panahon na iyon, nag-necessitate daw na kailangan magkaroon ng batas, purposely, para daw ma-address iyong problema ng kakulangan ng tubig dito sa Metro Manila. At noon pa man ay tumutol na kami po, kung hindi ninyo po batid, iyong unyon po sa MWSS ay ilan sa mga kasamahan namin, iyong MWSS Employees Union. At, of course, iyong concern nila, iyong services na epekto nito kung ito ay mapa-privatize under a concession agreement, at iyong epekto rin sa mga manggagawa, ang dami ho kasing manggagawa noon sa MWSS, almost 10 thousand dati ang employees. And concern nila, iyong effect, hindi lamang sa services, kung hindi epekto rin sa mga manggagawa. Kaya even before the 1995 Water Crisis Act na batas, tumutol na po iyong mga kawani at manggagawa, kasama rin namin ang mga consumers ng Metro Manila. Kaya tulad ninyo, may history tayo ng paglaban. At natutuwa kami na kasama rin po kayo sa usapin na ito.

At tama po iyong point ninyo na maraming provisions doon sa agreement na—well, other than the Water Crisis Act of 1995—binibigyan ng kapangyarihan ang Pangulo na gumawa ng mga kongkretong hakbang kasama iyong pagsasapribado ng naturang ahensiya, ito ay mahigpit natin na tinutulan, ng mga kawani at mga consumers. Ngunit tama rin po kayo, it fell on deaf ears, unfortunately.

But, we are now proven right, tulad po ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan ng Quezon City, nakita rin natin kung paano ngayon na it has beaten us in the rear, sabi nga nila, dahil ngayon, although hindi lang po ngayon ito problema, dati nang problema, kasi iyong sinasabing performance agreements na kailangan nilang i-comply, marami pa ho silang hindi na-comply diyang. Iyong usapin sa non-revenue water, iyong 24/7 availability ng tubig, iyong usapin hinggil sa nabanggit ninyo na, iyong water rate rabasing, at among others. Tama po iyong observation na maraming mga basis, mga dahilan, para dapat sa minimum ni-review na iyong contract before.

Ang tanong ko po, hindi pa tapos iyong kontrata, tama po ba? Kailan po dapat ito matapos sa pagkaalam ng ating Kinatawan, Mr. Speaker, Madam?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, sa 2022 pa po dapat mag-e-expire pero ni-renew na nila noong 2009 or 2014, basta nag-renew na sila nang extended for 15 years kaya ang naging bagong ending ay 2037. That is also why part of my recommendation is to cancel the extension, kasi walang performance review na nagaganap at hindi pa sila nag-a-account doon sa mga

bagay na kinolekta nila na natigil. Hindi ba katulad nga noong sinabi ko, iyong Laiban?

REP. GAITE. Laiban Dam.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Alam natin that now, it still is a project that is not ongoing. Ito po ay kinokolekta na sa atin mula 2003. So magkano na po ba ang nakolekta doon? Ano na po ba ang nangyari doon? They have not accounted that, sa atin.

Iyong replacement water, iyong NIA na sinasabi nating dapat ibalik sa aming mga kababayan sa Bulacan na farmers, that is a P5.4-billion project. Sinimulan na po nilang kolektahin ito mula 2007 rate rebasing. Hanggang ngayon, kasama pa rin po ito sa ating mga financial feasibility studies na binabayaran pa rin po ng mga taumbayan.

Ang tanong, nai-bid out na po ito at may nanalo na e—iyong Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project. So, nasaan iyong pera na binayaran natin? Bakit ibang tao na ang gagawa noong supply ng replacement ng tubig sa Bulacan? So, they have not accounted for that, at iyan ang dahilan kung bakit ayaw natin silang payagan na mag-increase ng presyo until such time na mai-account nila sa atin lahat ng kinolekta nila na hindi naman natuloy na mga proyekto.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, kagalang-galang na Congresswoman Herrera-Dy. Talagang kung titingnan ninyo lang, para talagang napakaraming usapin, Mr. Speaker, iyong mga katulad kasi doon pa lamang sa sabi ninyo po, 2022 pa dapat mag-e-expire, pero hindi pa tapos iyong kontrata ay ni-renew na. Alam po ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan kung bakit? Ano ho ba ang basis? Hindi ba normally in contracts, hihintayin mo dahil kasi iyong performance ang tinitingnan mo e, dahil gusto mong makita kung karapat-dapat nga ba itong kompanyang ito ay manatili pa batay sa kaniyang performance? Kung 2009 pa, e hindi mo pa nakikita iyong kabuuang performance ng naturang ahensiya. Alam ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan, Mr. Speaker, kung ano ba ang background nito? Why was it immediately extended when the fact hindi pa tapos iyong kontrata? Two years pa—three years pa from now.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Sa pagkakaalam ko, Mr. Speaker, tinakot na naman ang gobyerno ng mga concessionaires ng, “Naku, lalaki ang presyo ng tubig kasi sa laki ng investment namin, kapag na-divide mo doon lang sa unang 25 years, ...”

REP. GAITE. Lalaki iyan.

REP. HERRERA-DY. “...masyadong lolobo ang babayaran ng taumbayan kaya i-extend ninyo dapat

para imbes na divided by 25, divided by plus 15 pa.” Ganoon na naman. Tinakot na naman ang gobyerno, nauto na naman yata tayo sa gobyerno at ine-extend naman po natin without a performance review. At kaya iyon nga iyong nilalaban natin na hindi naman dapat ganoon kasi ipinasok mo iyan on a 25-year contract. You made business plans based on a 25-year contract when you signed the concession agreement in 1997. You cannot change the name of the game in the middle na, “Oops, teka lang, mas malaki pa pala iyong gagastusin namin, so dapat i-extend ninyo kami.” Kaya hindi justified iyong extension noong concession agreement.

REP. GAITE. Mr. Speaker, kagalang-galang na ating Kinatawan, talagang totoo po ano, parang lagi na lamang ang paraan iyong sabi ninyo pong tinatakot o tine-threaten. At narinig ko rin dati iyan e noong unang ayaw nilang payagan, Mr. Speaker, na magkaroon ng rate rebasing. Sinasabi nila na kapag hindi magre-rate rebasing, posibleng magkaroon ng problema sa tubig. Apparently, parang we are being held hostage by these corporations providing a very vital service—tubig. Alam na nating paulit-ulit iyong sinasabing, “Water is life,” ano? At kapag wala kang tubig, naku, isang napakasakit sa ulo para sa mga mamamayan iyan and we have experienced that during the summer. Ito lang nakaraang summer, nag-rationing. Ang masakit niyan, supposedly tag-ulan na, bumagyo nga kamakailan, and yet, we are still under a rationing regime. As a matter of fact, ako po ay taga-Pasig, we only have about less than 12 hours a day na tubig hanggang ngayon. At ang isang malaking kuwestiyon na tulad ng nabanggit ninyo ay ang daming mga provisions doon sa performance review na nava-violate nila. Pero apparently, walang sumisita.

Ang tanong ko po, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Congresswoman, sino ho ba dapat ang may responsibility dito sa sinasabing performance review? Is it again, probably another international agency? Or mayroon bang local counterpart na may responsibility para ma-review iyong performance nila insofar as it should be at par or should be compliant with the provisions of the concessionaire agreement, Mr. Speaker?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, by virtue of the concession agreement, it has to be the regulatory office. Iyon talaga ang may main responsibility to monitor the compliance of the concessionaires.

Unfortunately, like what I have been shouting for the longest time, they have an incestuous relationship inside that building—the corporate office, the regulatory office and the concessionaires.

How can you regulate people who feed you? I have been shouting this for the past 10 years. How can

you regulate people who feed you? That is why I filed the Water Regulatory Commission Bill in order for regulation to be independent from the concessionaires and even the corporate office dahil regulatory office ang nagpapasuweldo rin sa kanila, in essence, the concessionaires. So, how can you regulate people who feed you?

So, by law, by concession agreement, it has to be a regulatory office, but they had not been doing their jobs for the longest time.

REP. GAITE. Okay. Maraming salamat po sa kasagutang iyon sapagkat lalong lumililaw iyong may mga institusyon o ahensiya ng gobyerno na may tungkulin para protektahan ang publiko, pero sa halip na gampanan nila iyong kanilang tungkulin ay ang sabi ng obserbasyon ng iba ay nakamanhik-luhod sila doon sa mga malalaking kompanya. Of course, itong isyu na ito ay hindi po bago. As a matter of fact, ang isang concern rin ng Kinatawang ito ay baka magkaroon ng repeat performance doon sa mga iba pang water districts ngayon na ganyan din ang nagaganap.

According to the data we obtained from the Local Water Utilities Administration, liban sa MWSS na isa sa pinakamalaki, sabihin na nating water district sa buong Pilipinas, na may humigit kumulang mga 500 din na mga water districts sa buong Pilipinas. Pero ang nakababahala, batay sa nakuha rin naming mga datos at impormasyon, iyong model ng privatization through a concessionaire agreement or a joint venture agreement or a build-operate-transfer agreement ay nauulit sa mga iba pang mga water districts.

Nakarating sa amin ang reklamo ng mga kawani ng Bacolod City Water District, ng Sta. Cruz Water District, at ng San Jose del Monte City Water District.

Dito sa Bulacan, napakarami po na iba pang mga water districts that have similar situations, where under a joint venture agreement, build-operate-transfer, bulk water supply agreements, at ang iba pa ay pumapasok rin iyong pribadong capital para hindi lamang po maging joint, meaning, mag-e-exist iyong dalawang parties, pero dito po, it was practically a takeover tulad po ng binabanggit ninyo.

Nakakabahala iyong binabanggit ninyo po na ina-assert ngayon ng Maynilad at Manila Water that they are mere agents. Baka puwede ninyo pong ipaliwanang po ito. Bakit? Ano ho ba ang ipinagkaiba noong mere agents at iyong sinasabi ninyo pong public utility? Bakit ho this is a concern for the public and others, at kung bakit ba ito ay importanteng aspeto para makita natin kung nasaan ba iyong tinatawag na obligasyon at liabilities ng mga naturang na pribadong kumpanya, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Well unang-una, kapag public utility company ka, hindi mo

puwedeng ipasa ang corporate income tax mo at other business expenses sa taumbayan, hindi ba? Kaya they want to be declared as mere agents kasi hindi sila iyong public utility. Pangalawa, hindi sila matatali doon sa 12 percent return on investment. Pangatlo, they cannot use the assets of MWSS before privatization to compute for the return on rate base. Dahil doon sa return on rate base na ginagamit, nate-technical lang po na ginagamit sa pag-compute, ginagamit ang assets ng MWSS before the privatization. They did not spend on that. You cannot compute this on that one, but because they are not public utilities, ang kine-claim nila is MWSS na kasama doon kaya, ginagamit nila pati assets ng MWSS as part of it. That is why we can never consider them as public—as mere agents. They are public utility companies because they deal with utilities. Kaya nga sinasabi ko, eto pong resolusyon na hawak ko, eto po ang isang senyas na ang regulatory office ay naging pabaya sa ating taumbayan dahil itong resolusyon na ito ay idineklara nila through a technical working group na sila ay public utility company. Walang karapatan ang COA mag-audit sa kanila dahil sila—iyon pang isa. Hindi sila ma-rate audit ng COA dahil hindi raw sila public utility. Hindi ma-audit ang kanilang mga libro dahil hindi sila public utility at dahil sila ay agent lamang, and remains to be a private corporation.

Kaya, napaka-unfair po ng dokumento na ito. Kaya lagi kong sinasabi, na a mere technical working group can also reverse all that was written in this resolution. Eto pong resolusyon na ito ay napaka-powerful. It declares them as mere agents. It kicks out the COA to rate audit them. And it insists that the return on rate base is computed using the assets of MWSS before privatization at marami pa pong iba.

REP. GAITE. Tama po. Ako po ay kaisa sa mariin na pagtingin na karapat-dapat lang sa minimum, i-review iyong current performance ng mga water concessionaires at kami po sa Makabayan bloc ay pumoposisyon rin na dapat hindi lang i-review at dapat nga na ibalik sa kontrol ng gobyerno sapagkat naniniwala kami na ang isang public utility na tubig na isang—sabi nga ng United Nations Convention, ang tubig ay karapatan. It is a human right. Bilang isang karapatan, dapat may access iyong mga ordinaryong mamamayan dito, dahil tulad nga ng nasabi, dahil kung wala kang tubig, ay puwede kang dalawang araw lang na wala kang inumin na dalisay, malinis, at affordable na tubig, ikaw ay madaling mamamatay. Kaya po iyan po talaga ang concern namin, kaya napakainam ngayon na mapag-uusapan ito at bagamat gusto rin sana, although wala pang masyadong malinaw. Noong una ay narinig namin ang statement ng Pangulo na dapat ay ipakulong, iyon ang una naming narinig, ipakulong itong nananabotahe sa ating ekonomiya dahil napakalaki niyang singilin kung ito nga ay babayaran.

Pero, hindi namin alam kung ano na ngayon iyong posisyon kasi ang huli naming narinig ay sapat na lamang na magkaroon ng review for purposes of identifying which provisions of the agreement are onerous, and that will still pursue the arrangement where a private company will run, manage, and control the provision of such a utility. Ano po ba ang tingin ng ating Kinatawan dito sa usapin at hanggang anong extent ba dapat natin abutin etong problema sa water concessionaires dito sa Metro Manila at sa iba pang mga lugar dito sa buong Pilipinas? Mr. Speaker, kagalang-galang na Congresswoman?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, naniniwala ako. I believe there are some resolutions and bills here that were filed, but they also have to pass through the scrutiny of Congress, the existing agreement, and to review how we can move forward, kung ito ba ay katulad ng isina-suggest ninyo na dapat bang ibalik sa gobyerno o ito ba ay dapat palitan ng mga concessionaires. Ito ay subject sa mga magiging imbestigasyon pa natin dito sa Kongreso, kaya ito ay dapat mariing pag-aralan nating mga Mambabatas, both the Lower House and the Upper House and, at the same time, iyong ating Executive, I think is also doing their part, pero naniniwala ako na very basic, as public utility companies, they have to pass through the scrutiny of Congress at iyon po ang wala at absent doon sa 1997 when the concession agreement was signed. It never passed through the scrutiny of Congress and it has to pass through us para mapag-aralan po nating mabuti.

Kaya, marami po tayong work that have to be done and as to the direction, siyempre, we all have to discuss these thoroughly here in Congress, as well as with the Executive department.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Congresswoman, sapagkat, tama po na ang daming concerns. Batay sa isang nakuha naming impormasyon, doon lamang sa pricing ng tubig ay bagamat nagho-hold sila ng mga consultations, apparently, para siyang, hindi daw consultations ang nagaganap kundi everytime mayroon silang proposal for a rate rebasing ay it was a one-way discussion. Sasabihin nila iyong mangyayari pero for the public, “for your information only,” parang ganoon. Pero walang recognition na dapat bilang isang public utility ay may role iyong public lalo na kung itong gagawin nilang policies ay magre-result sa napakataas na pagtataas ng presyo ng tubig.

As it is, based on findings, napakalaki na ang itinaas ng presyo ng tubig since 1997, almost 1,000 percent na iyong sinasabing data na nakuha namin. At itong lahat ng pagtaas na ito ay walang benefit ng public consultation. Hindi matatawag na public consultation ang ginagawa ngayon ng Maynilad at Manila Water

sapagkat hindi sila talaga participatory kaya maganda po iyong inyong inilahad na statement at privilege speech. Ang Makabayan bloc po ay nakikiisa kasama ang BAYAN MUNA sa inyong pag-pursue na i-hold accountable natin ang mga private companies tulad ng Maynilad at Manila Water Company Inc., including the institutions such as the MWSS for their, baka act of commission or act of omission na protektahan iyong publiko sapagkat tama po iyong inyong observation. Hindi ho tayo naghihiwalay sa paninindigan na dapat bilang isang public utility, ito ay isang serbisyong karapat-dapat na vested with public interest.

Kaya po, mula sa Makabayan bloc at sa BAYAN MUNA, kami ay nagpapasalamat sa inyong ginawang privilege speech at asahan ninyo na susuportahan po natin ang mga panawagan para alamin ang talagang puno't dulo ng mga suliranin sa MWSS at ano ang puwedeng legislation para matulungan ang mamamayan.

Maraming salamat Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Maraming salamat din po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Okay. Thank you so much.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the referral of this privilege speech to the Committee on Rules.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Lady from Party-List KABATAAN, the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago, be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Rep. Sarah Jane Elago, you are recognized for your privilege speech.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today, one day ahead of the Human Rights Day which is observed every year on December 10, the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or UDHR.

A milestone document proclaiming the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The theme for this year 2019 is, “Youth Standing Up for Human Rights.” After a year, marked by the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which culminated on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November this year, the United Nations’ plan is to capitalize on the current momentum and spotlight the leadership role of youth in collective movements as a source of inspiration for a better future.

Under the universal call to action, “Stand Up for Human Rights,” this Representation from KABATAAN Party-List joins the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in celebrating the potential of the youth, our potential as constructive agents of change, amplifying our voices, raising our sentiments, and engaging a broad range of global audiences in the promotion and protection of rights. This campaign is designed to encourage, galvanize and showcase how the youth all over the world stand up for rights and against racism, hate speech, bullying, discrimination and climate change, just to name a few.

We may ask: “Why the youth?”

First and foremost, the youth’s participation is essential to achieve sustainable development for all. Participation in public life is a fundamental principle of human rights. Young people are seeking to participate in all decisions that have a direct and indirect impact upon their well-being. They need to be heard to inform more effective decision-making and achieve sustainable development for all. The framers of the ASEAN Youth Development Index likewise regard the youth as an important section of the population in any country, and are in need of attention as they are both our current and future leaders and the catalyst for development. Further, the youth can play a crucial role in positive change. Young people have always been major drivers of political, economic and social transformation. They are at the forefront of grasp with mobilizations for positive change and to bring fresh ideas and solutions for a better world.

Lastly, empowering youth to better know and claim their rights will generate benefits globally. Young people are often marginalized and they encounter difficulties in accessing and enjoying their rights because of their age. Upholding their rights and empowering them to better know and claim them will generate benefits globally.

With this, Mr. Speaker, I call on each and every Member of this august Body to continue supporting the youth in defending our power to shape our future, to claim the best possible present and future for all, to support the young people in defending human rights, and to support the young people in bringing about

positive changes in our communities, to support young people in not only battling all forms of discrimination and injustice, but defending justice and calling for accountability for all abuses, for all tyranny, and injustices that we do not want to inherit.

Mr. Speaker, just last week, a group of young people from organizations which are based in schools and communities went and visited the offices of the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Higher Education, and the National Youth Commission to bring their petition, to stop the ruthless vilification campaigns and caravans against school and community-based organizations, which are currently done in schools and in various spaces nationwide.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Fernandez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Pablo John F. Garcia.*

Mr. Speaker, nananawagan po tayo sa mga nasabing ahensiya na ito na dinggin agad itong petisyon, na itigil ang pagmamaliit sa mga kabataan, na itigil ang paninira sa mga kabataan—imbes na siraan at imbes na magpakalat ng mga kasinungalingan, sandamakmak na fake news at sandamakmak na mga disinformation, suportahan ang mga kabataan sa pamamagitan ng pakikinig sa kanilang mga tanong at pagsama sa pag-ambag ng sagot o kaya naman ay solusyon. Kung hindi pa natin nalalaman sa ngayon kung ano ang isasagot o kung anuman ang solusyon na ating ihahapag sa kanila, nais naming maging parte ng solusyon na iyan.

Iyan po ang dahilan kung bakit maraming mga kabataan, hindi lang po mga kabataan, kundi maski maging mga bata, mga batang babae, mula kay Greta Thunberg, kay Malala Yousafzai, kay Ronalyn ng Save our Schools Network, kay Shibby De Guzman, na nagsasalita para sa klima, para sa edukasyon, laban sa extrajudicial killings, laban sa pagsasara ng mga paaralang Lumad. Pabata nang pabata ang mga nagsasalita na iyan. Dahil sa kanilang access sa information, hindi na po natin sila maloloko o hindi natin maitatago sa kanila kung ano ang hindi makatuwiran na nangyayari sa ating lipunan.

Kaya naman imbes na ipagkait sa kanila ang impormasyon para aktibo na magampanan ang kanilang tungkulin bilang pag-asa ng bayan, hayaan natin sila, i-welcome po natin sila sa mga espasyo kung saan puwede rin silang maka-pakinig, kung saan puwede rin silang makipag-debate, kung saan puwede rin silang makipag-talakayan kasama ang ating policy makers, kasama ang ating leaders.

Marahil, Mr. Speaker, ang isang pangyayari na marami sa atin dito ang nagtatanong kung bakit nila nagawa iyon o kung kumusta na sila, ay ang nangyari sa mga artista ng Panday Sining sa Manila na ngayon ay naideklara bilang *persona non grata* sa Siyudad ng Maynila.

Mr. Speaker, for us public servants, the bigger question would be why these Panday Sining artists continue to act in protest and defiance. Whether or not we acknowledge their work as graffiti or protest art, we cannot just ignore the questions and concerns they raised. We may not all agree with their form but having visited the artists arrested, 10 araw po sila na nakulong nang walang kaso, ngayon lang nailabas ang resolusyon sa kanilang kaso. Maski po ang porma ng pag-aresto sa kanila, ni hindi binasahan ng kanilang Miranda Rights. Making time during the past 10 days to visit them and to understand their hugot, their hanash, to further understand their calls even for a short period of time, I urge our fellow public servants to show them that their calls have not fallen into deaf ears, and we will do our very best, we will do what we can in our capacity to address the issues they raised.

Mr. Speaker, kinakailangan din po na katulad ng mga naibahagi ng ating mga kasamahan, isang araw bago ang pagkilala at pagdiriwang ng buong mundo ng International Human Rights Day, na tugunan natin ang mga karaingan, hindi bilang isa o hindi itrato ito bilang isang krimen, kundi mga mensahe na kinakailangan para sa tunay na mapaunlad ang ating bayan at ang kalagayan ng karapatang pantao sa ating bayan.

Kalagayan ng karapatang pantao, hindi lamang sa loob ng Batasang Pambansa, hindi lamang sa loob ng plenaryo na ito, kundi maging sa loob ng mga tahanan, ng mga eskuwelahan, sa ating mga komunidad, nararapat lamang na patuloy nating ipagtanggol ang mga karapatang pantao dahil iyan po ay naipanalo ng mga nauna sa atin na puspusan na nagsalita, puspusan na nakibaka para sa mga karapatan na nasa atin na ngayon. Gagamitin natin ito nang buong may pagkilala sa bigat ng ating tungkulin at sa buong pagkilala sa hamon na dapat natin itong patuloy na ipagtanggol para sa susunod na henerasyon.

Kaya naman, G. Ispiker, ang pagbati ng Pandaigdigang Araw ng mga Karapatang Pantao mula sa Representasyon ng KABATAAN ay pagbati ng pagpupugay sa lahat ng human rights defenders at pagbati ng pagsasabi sa lahat, dito sa Pilipinas at maging sa buong mundo, na hindi tayo titigil hanggang hindi nakakamit ang hustisya at pananagutan para sa lahat ng biktima ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Mabuhay ang human rights defenders. Mabuhay ang lahat ng nangangalaga at nagtatanggol ng karapatang pantao.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Sarah Jane Elago to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.



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

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is suspended.

*It was 3: 31 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:37 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move to extend the Privilege Hour for one more hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby extended for one more hour.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Lady from Party-List ACT TEACHERS, the Hon. France L. Castro, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Hon. France Castro is recognized for her privilege speech.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CASTRO (F.L.)

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Hinggil sa Pandaigdigang Araw ng Karapatang Pantao, karapatan sa edukasyon, kalusugan at batayang mga serbisyo; karapatan sa pagkain, tubig, tirahan; karapatan sa trabaho, nakabubuhay na sahod at makataong kondisyon sa paggawa; karapatan sa buhay, seguridad at pag-unlad—ito ang mga konseptong abstrakto lamang pero para sa kabahagi sa higit sa 100 milyong mamamayang Pilipino na marginalized at aping sektor, ito ay mga konseptong walang katumbas na salapi o yaman, hindi makikita o hindi mahahawakan ngunit nangangailangan ng araw-araw na buhay at kamatayang pagkilos at paglaban.

Magandang hapon, G. Ispiker at mga ka-Mambabatas, isang maaga ngunit militanteng Pandaigdigang Araw ng Karapatang Pantao sa inyong lahat.

Bukas, ika-10 ng Disyembre, gugunitain sa buong mundo ang pagtanggap o adoption ng Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ang kauna-unahang kalatas ng United Nations ukol sa karapatang pantao, naproklama matapos ang ika-317 plenaryong pulong nito noong 1948.

Ano ba ang konsepto ng karapatang pantao? Ang mga karapatang pantao ay obligasyon ng Estado sa kaniyang mamamayan. Halimbawa, dapat siguruhin ng Estado na ang bawat bata ay nakakapag-aral, dekalidad na edukasyon sa lahat ng antas sa pamamagitan ng libre at compulsory basic education at abot-kayang tertiary education. Mas mabigat ang obligasyong ito ng Estado kung ang bata ay mula sa mahirap na pamilya o katutubong komunidad.

Samakatuwid, obligasyon ng Estado na magpatakbo ng pampublikong sistema ng edukasyon at pondohan ito nang sapat. Kaakibat nito ang obligasyong suportahan at hikayatin ang pagpapalawak ng mga pribadong pagsisikap ng mga mamamayang hindi naaabot ng pamahalaan, mahirap at mga katutubong komunidad. Para sa aming mga guro, hindi maihihiwalay sa karapatang ito ng mga bata ang karapatan namin bilang manggagawa sa edukasyon. Samakatuwid, obligasyon ng Estado na siguruhin din para sa bawat guro sa public school man o sa private school ang sweldong kayang magbigay sa kanila ng disenteng buhay at pati na rin ang karampatang benepisyo.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Garcia (P.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez.*

Obligasyon ng pamahalaan na siguruhin sa bawat guro ang makataong kundisyon nila sa pagtuturo, dahil kung magsisiksikan sa classroom, walang electric fan, kulang ang chalk at gamit panturo, at walang patlang sa kailangang ipasáng MOV, walang leksyong maiintindihan ang bata kahit gaano kagaling ni teacher. Underfunded schools plus overworked and underpaid teachers equals disaster in education.

Obligasyon din ng pamahalaan na suportahan ang anumang samahan at unyon ng mga guro na nagsusulong at nakikipaglaban para sa mga karapatang ito, at huwag silang takutin, demonisahin at pakialamanan. Hindi hinugot sa hangin ng mga bata, guro at manggagawa sa sektor ng edukasyon ang mga karapatang ito. Mula ito sa mga pandaigdigang kasunduan sa pagitan ng mga bansa, kabilang na ang Pilipinas. Bukod sa Universal Declaration on Human Rights, mayroong UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-International Labor Organization Recommendation

concerning the Status of Teachers at UNESCO-ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel. Nariyan din ang kasunduang ine-echo ang mga ito: ang Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for International Human Rights and International Law sa pagitan ng gobyerno ng Republika ng Pilipinas at ng National Democratic Front. Susundan ito sana ng Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms na may panukalang borador na mula sa NDF, kung hindi lang pinutol noong administrasyon ang usapang pangkapayapaan. Pero nabubuhay tayo ngayon sa lipunang tinotokhang ang mga batang nagmakaawang “May exam pa po ako bukas, Sir.” Walang awang dinakip at ikinulong at pinatay ang batang bumili lang ng load sa tindahan malapit sa kanilang bahay, at ginagawang ulila ang libong mga bata sa ilalim ng giyerang tila lulong sa droga.

Sa bansa natin, nirararat ang mga bata at gurong nagka-camping lamang, binobomba ang mga sibilyang komunidad, ginagawang kampo ng militar ang mga eskwelahan o tinatayuan ng mga detachment malapit sa mga ito. Binabari ang mga guro sa loob mismo ng kanilang classroom at sa harap ng kanilang mga estudyanteng hindi bababa sa 10 taong gulang. Pinapasok ng mga pulis at militar ang mga eskwelahan at kolehiyo sa mga kunwaring seminar kontra-droga at terorismo. Tinitiktikan ang mga progresibong manggagawa at unyonista sa edukasyon dahil itinuturing na krimen ang kanilang makaguro at makabayang panawagan bilang “left propaganda” at sila ay “legal fronts.” Pinutol ang pag-aaral ng libong batang Lumad sa hindi makatuwirang pagsasara ng mga eskwelahang itinayo at pinatakbo sa sarili nilang pagsisikap, at sunud-sunod na ipinasara ang iba pang mga katulad na mga indigenous schools at community learning centers.

Bilang Kinatawan ng mga guro at education support personnel, makailang-ulit ko nang ihinatid dito sa Kamara ang mga panawagan ng aming sektor sa pamamagitan ng bills, resolution, talumpati na gaya nito at panukalang amyenda sa taunang budget.

Inuudyok ko na aksyunan na natin dito sa Kongreso sa lalong madaling panahon ang napakaraming resolusyon at pribilehiyong talumpati mula sa Representasyong ito at mga Kinatawan mula sa Makabayan bloc, at ng iba pang mga kasamahan natin dito sa Kamara. Sa lalong madaling panahon din, dapat ay aksyunan na rin ang mga House bills para sa karapatan at kagalingan na hinain ng marami sa atin. Ilan sa mga ito ay umusad na. Sa puntong ito ay nais kong ipaabot ang matinding pasasalamat ng aming sektor sa Committee on Basic Education, Committee on Labor, at Committee on Government Enterprises, sa kanilang maagap na pag-agenda sa aming mga panukala. Ngunit ang isang mayor na panawagan para sa sahod na nakapaloob sa House Bill ay hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa dinidinig mula sa kaniyang Committee.

Ang pinapanawagan din natin na minimum na salaries para sa mga private school teachers to P30,000 per month ay hindi pa rin natatalakay.

Ipinapanawagan ko ngayon na i-agenda na ang mga imbestigasyong itinutulak namin na Makabayan bloc sa mga extrajudicial killings at tangkang extrajudicial killings, iligal na profiling laban sa mga guro sa basic education, at iba pang mga human rights violations—mga Resolusyon na pending sa Committee on Public Order and Safety at Committee on Rules. Ipakita natin sa mamamayan na prayoridad ng administrasyong ito ang pagkumenda sa impunity, pagtigil sa paglabag sa karapatang pantao, at pagpapanagot sa mga maysala at responsable sa mga ito.

Inuudyok din natin ang agarang pagbubuo ng Committee on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity na hanggang ngayon ay walang chair at may dalawang miyembro pa lamang for Minority. Ito sana ang komiteng tatalakay sa mga resolusyong magtutulak sa resumption ng usapang pangkapayapaan na hahawan sa daan para sa mga substansyal na repormang sosyo-ekonomiko gaya ng makatuwirang sahod, repormang agraryo, at iba pa na tutugon sa mga ugat ng armadong tunggalian sa pagitan ng pamahalaan at ng Communist Party of the Philippines. Ang paglalalag ng mga repormang ito ang natatanging paraan na tutuldok sa digmaan at magsisiguro sa ating mga mamamayan ng kanilang mga karapatan. Nawa ay maging salik ang Kongresong ito sa hangarin natin para sa tunay na kapayapaan: kapayapaang nakaugat sa hustisya, hindi ang katahimikan ng bartolina at libingan.

Iyon lang po, Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa Kinatawan. Marami pong salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. France Castro to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the referral of the said privilege speech. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Lady from the First District of Bukidnon, Hon. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, be recognized to avail of the remaining time of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba is recognized for her privilege speech.

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ACOSTA-ALBA

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues.

The 18-day campaign to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is ongoing. It started in November 25 and ends tomorrow, the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, which is the International Human Rights Day.

Therefore, I stand before you today to talk about one of the worst transgressions of human rights—violence against women and children. The United Nations (UN) defines violence against women as:

x x x any act of gender-based violence that results in, or likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Furthermore, the UN states that although violence against women and girls or VAWG is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today, much of its cases remain unreported due to the stigma surrounding it. VAW is a gender-based violence. This is so because women and girls have to live in a society where there are gendered social structures and norms which have the effect of silencing women and leaving them behind in terms of claiming their rights. I am certain that we are one in believing that we all want to eliminate violence against women because it is a gross violation of human rights.

The World Health Organization states that out of three women, one has experienced either physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner or non-partner in their lifetime. UN data show that one in two women killed worldwide were killed by their partners or family in 2017; while only one out of 20 men were killed under similar circumstances. In fact, VAW, Violence Against Women is as serious as a cause of death and incapacity among women over reproductive age as cancer, and a greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined.

In our own backyard, the National Demographic Health Survey in 2017, released by the Philippine Statistics Authority, revealed that one in four Filipino women, aged 15 to 49, has experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence from their husband or partner.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Fernandez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Rose Marie “Baby” J. Arenas.*

Women are dying because they are women. This is unacceptable. I am certain that all of us will agree that no one deserves to live a life of constant fear of attacks, whether physical or otherwise, for being a woman or a girl. These and more are the reasons why there is a global impetus to end violence against women, to emphasize that VAW is a human rights violation. The 16-day campaign to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women started in 1991 in the United States. Ten years later, our government, with the leadership of the Philippine Commission on Women and key stakeholders, joined the global campaign to push for laws that will establish mechanisms to end violence against women.

In 2006, our government mandated the 18-Day Campaign to End the Violence Against Women, from November 25 until December 12, which is the date of signing of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, to supplement the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes.

Today, there is a resounding call around the world to work towards a world that is free from all forms of violence against women and children, where VAW is just a part of an unjust past.

As legislators, we can foster a VAW-free Philippines by ensuring that our political commitments are translated into laws. We have a crucial role in ensuring that the laws we enact serve to protect and fulfill the rights of our women and girls to be free from all forms of violence. Although we have come a long way in enacting laws protecting women and girls, in fact, we are seen as a frontrunner in terms of ensuring a VAW-free environment, we admittedly have a long way to go in the women and girls’ struggle for equal rights. We are highlighting two forms of violence against women and girls in our observance of the 18-Day Campaign Against Violence Against Women, Campaign Against VAW: child marriage and the denial of access to crucial information and services on health that results in unplanned, mistimed, and unwanted pregnancy.

The House Committee on Welfare of Children and the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, in partnership with the Philippine Legislators’ Committee on Population and Development, a nongovernment organization advancing human development legislation is observing this 18-Day Campaign Against Violence Against Women through an exhibit called “In Her Shoes.” Last week, we opened the exhibit which highlights child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. Child marriage—two words we do not or cannot imagine to be combined— not only happens in other countries, it is also practiced here in the Philippines.

According to UNICEF, the Philippines ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the absolute number of child marriages and union.

According to the National Demographic and Health Survey of 2013, 15 percent of women aged 20 to 24 years old were first married or in union before the age of 18. This is approximately 700,000. The 2013 survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority shows that marriages involving teenage brides, aged 15 to 19 years old, account for 12 percent of all registered marriages in the Philippines. In 2013, there were 442,603 registered marriages. It was highlighted that girls are disproportionately affected by the practice of child marriage with the 4 girls married under the age of 18, for every 1 boy married under the age of 18. This also means that around 3 out of 4 girls married before 18 years old are married off to adult men. While we have national laws setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 years old, there is continued practice of child marriage as it is allowed by certain religious laws and tradition or cultural practices.

As attested by the UNCRC and various other international human rights conventions, child marriage is a fundamental human rights violation which has a negative impact on the health and development of children. It denies them of their childhood, disrupts their education and limits their opportunities. Married girls or child brides have increased risk of violence and abuse, as well as life-threatening consequences on health as pregnancy-related complications are found to be the leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 10 to 19 years old. Child marriage also denies both girls and boys the right to choose when and whom to marry, a decision that should be made freely.

Adolescent pregnancy or pregnancy within the age range of 10 to 19 years old is a cause and effect of child marriages and unions. One of the root causes of adolescent pregnancy is the denial of access to crucial information and services on health. While the Reproductive Health Law mandates age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education, implementing agencies led by the Department of Education have yet to fully implement this provision of the law. While there is a lack of information, adolescents continue to engage in sexual activities and get pregnant as a result. Every hour, 24 babies are born to teenage mothers. In a year, girls aged 10 to 14 years old have registered a minimum of 30 pregnancies. These statistics have caused the call on the government to declare adolescent pregnancy as a social and national emergency. We consider this an emergency because pregnancy-related complications are among the leading causes of mortality among girls between 15 and 19 years of age, whether married or unmarried, around the world. Infant mortality among children of very young mothers is higher, sometimes as much as two times higher than among those of older mothers.

The task to address these concerns is daunting and calls for a collective and whole-of-society approach.

With the help of stakeholders composed of allies in the Executive and Legislative branches, and partners from civil society organizations, an alliance called #GirlDefenders was formed.

This alliance aims to defend the rights of girls to be free from all forms of violence and abuse. We are in this fight together. As a collective, we support policy measures that seek to prohibit child marriage and provide appropriate programs and services to prevent adolescent pregnancy. Both measures help ensure that women and girls will no longer have to live in a society where their rights are disregarded and are considered inferior because no one deserves to live this way.

As legislators, we have been entrusted the task of enacting laws that protect the rights of vulnerable sectors such as women and girls. May we always choose to enact policies that will give rise to a VAW-free home, community, society and world. Observances such as the 18-Day Campaign Against Violence Against Women serves as a reminder of the challenge at hand for legislators—the challenge to enact laws that protect women and girls and put them in an equal position with the rest of the world.

For a girl is too young to marry. She must not be both a mother and a child. We say “no” to more children having children and make an appeal to prohibit child marriage. There is no other time to do it but now. Let us all stand up to protect the rights of women and children, women and girls in particular, through legislation and be the #GirlDefenders of women and girls our society needs.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, would the honorable Lady from Bukidnon be willing to answer one simple question from this Representation?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Yes, of course, to Congresswoman Nava who is also the Chair of the Committee on Population and Family Relations. This really concerns her Committee.

REP. NAVA. Thank you so much, Your Honor.

REP. BOLILIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we please recognize Honorable Nava for her interpellation. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The Honorable Nava is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. NAVA. Thank you so much, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. I would just like to be clarified and made

aware of certain recent data here in our country. Your Honor, what do you think are the implications for having so many teenage pregnancies here in our country?

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, the Philippines ranks second in adolescent fertility rate in Southeast Asia. With 60.5 births per 1,000 women, 24 births take place every hour among adolescent mothers and one in every 10 females aged 15 to 19 has already begun child bearing or are already mothers.

The Commission on Population recently has raised the alarm about the growing number of pregnancies among teenagers as young as 10 years old and amid the government calling teen pregnancy a national social emergency. The PopCom further stated that there is an average of 530 teenagers who get pregnant daily and the figure has stayed above 500 since 2010. The number hit a record high in 2017 when the agency recorded 514 pregnancies each day. The PopCom also asserted that they are taking a closer look at the 10 to 14 age group as they found a 50-percent increase in teenage pregnancies since 2011 totalling to 2,000 cases, wherein about 30 to 50 percent among these pregnancies are 10-year-olds.

They have also noted that the numbers among the 10-year-old age group are around 30, 40, 50 every year and so, once a week a 10-year old is giving birth in this country. What the PopCom had reported was, to say at the very least, critically alarming and uncomfortably disturbing. We all know adolescent pregnancy has health, economic and social implications, and these complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are very common among teenage mothers. Thus, teenage pregnancy remains to be a major contributor to maternal and child mortality. Furthermore, the emotional, psychological and social needs of pregnant adolescents can be greater than those of older women.

Early childbearing can likewise increase the risks for newborns like having low birthweight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal conditions. Young girls and teenage mothers are physically unprepared or emotionally ready to become a mother and raise a family. Motherhood, as we all know, is such a difficult and challenging role. The young girls face more risks or complications from pregnancy and childbirth and their babies might have a reduced chance of survival or are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and/or underdevelopment, and all these repercussions will perpetuate a vicious cycle of poverty for another generation.

REP. NAVA. Thank you so much, Your Honor. Indeed, we really need to be emotionally and physically prepared for motherhood which is a very, very challenging role and I think we will be willing to make extra efforts to give solutions to this problem.

Thank you so much, Your Honor, for this very

relevant data. No more questions. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Thank you, Congresswoman Nava.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we please recognize the Lady from GABRIELA Party-List, Hon. Arlene D. Brosas, for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). Hon. Arlene D. Brosas is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Mme. Speaker, a short manifestation with regard to the privilege speech of our Chairman of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong speech dahil naha-highlight hindi lang ang violence against women and children kundi the real situation of our women today. Katulad po ng nasabi ninyo na noong November 25 nagsimula ang 18 days of activism, #18DaysofActivism, at ipinagdiriwang natin at ng buong mundo ang International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women o IDEVAW. Ito po iyong pagtatakda ng national conscious day for the elimination of violence against women and children kada November 25 sa bisa ng Republic Act No. 10398 na matagumpay na naipasa natin sa Kongreso, kasama po ang GABRIELA Women's Party.

Kung babalikan po natin, higit ang usapin po dito sa November 25 ay ang pagkilala sa magkakapatid na Mirabal sisters na sina Patricia Mercedes, Maria Argentina Minerva at Antonia Maria Teresa, tatlong magigiting na kababaihan na kinilalang mga pambansang martir sa kanilang bansa sa Dominican Republic. Sila po iyong mga tinawag na Las Mariposas, lumaban na mga kababaihan sa diktaturyang Trujillo, si Heneral Rafael Trujillo na diktador sa panahon na iyan sa Dominican Republic.

Inihahalintulad po natin sa kalagayan dito at sa iba pang mga bansa na nagpo-protesta sa kasalukuyan na bahagi po talaga ang kababaihan sa mga pakikibaka ng mamamayan laban sa korapsyon sa gobyerno, panunupil ng estado, nabubulok na kalagayang pang-ekonomiya, panghihimasok ng iba't ibang mga imperyalistang bansa. Hanggang ngayon, sinasabi din natin na kailangan nating komprehensibong tingnan iyong usapin ng kababaihan, kaya ang panawagan ng kababaihan ay general din po tulad ng regular na trabaho, disente at abot-kayang pabahay, tunay na repormang agraryo, pagtigil sa militarisasyon at panunupil sa kanilang mga political beliefs at civilian rights, ano po, sa ating mga

komunidad. So, ganoon din iyong lumalalang estado ng milyong-milyong Pilipino sa ating bansa na pumupunta sa ibayong dagat dahil dito po ay mas bulnerable iyong mga kababaihan, ano, at sila ang pinakabulnerableng sektor sa ating lipunan.

Kamakailan nga lamang po ay nasa NAIA terminal ako noong October 30 at sinusundo ang bangkay ng isang OFW na si Jean Alberto para dalhin sa Antipolo dahil siya ay hindi nabigyan ng tulong noong mga panahon na iyon ng DFA at ng OWWA. Eleven days bago po nakuha ang bangkay ni Jean Alberto at ang bangkay po niya ay kinailangan pa naming sunduin at dalhin hanggang doon sa Antipolo para siya po ay malibing nang maayos.

So, bukod po doon, sinasabi po natin na ganoon nagsimula, November 25. Samantala, sinasabi rin natin na iyong usapin noong pagsasabatas ng RA 9262 ay mayroon pong historical ding pinagdaanan. Kung baga, the law was crafted over a decade ago with the full recognition of the fact that the feudal, patriarchal, macho and violent culture persists in the Philippines and which culture makes women vulnerable to abuse. Napaka-partikular po na pinasa ang batas na RA 9262 dahil mga intimate partners, partners at boyfriends na nagkaroon sila ng relasyon, ito po iyong ina-address at doon pinaparesponde sa usapin ng kababaihan. Today, this culture persists and may have worsened. Ito po iyong sinasabi natin na gender-based violence or Violence Against Women and Girls or VAWG, and it is a global pandemic na ang naapektuhan ay isa kada tatlong kababaihan in their lifetime. Iyong numbers po na ito were based on the data on violence against women, at kanina po ay narinig ko din iyong data, pero nais ko lang idagdag na 35 percent of women worldwide had experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. Globally, 7 percent of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner. Globally, as many as 38 percent of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner. Malaking bilang po iyon—38 percent. Two hundred million women have also experienced female genital mutilation or cutting.

Mayroon po kaming campaign kada February at ito po iyong tinatawag na One Billion Rising Movement. Sumasayaw po kami para sabihin sa mga tao na kailangan po nating tumayo against violence on women as one in three women across the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime and that is one billion women and girls. Every February po, we rise in countries across the world to show our local communities and the world what one billion looks like and shine a light on the rampant impunity and injustice that survivors most often face. So, ito po iyong kalagayan ng kababaihan kaugnay sa karahasan na ginagawa sa kanila.

So, sinusuportahan namin at natutuwa kami na

tumitindig ang ating butihing Sponsor kaugnay sa mga priority measures na kailangang-kailangan o priority legislative agenda particularly for our women. Hindi po ito laban ng kababaihan lang. Ang sinasabi nga namin ay laban ito ng bata, ng kababaihan, at ng ating bayan.

Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker. Thank you to the good Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we please refer the privilege speech and the interpellation and manifestation thereon to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

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

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

The Privilege Hour is terminated.

REP. ANDAYA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we please acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba of the First District of Bukidnon. They are the officials of Malitbog, Bukidnon: Vice-Mayor Cindy Aritrango, Administrator Catherine dela Rosa, Barangay Captains Joel Evangelista, Rosario Evangelista, Eltie Dainhay, Jettor Dansil, Ali Bandialan, Geronio Saripa, German Sul-aron, Ranela Emata, Pepito Dominguez, Ronald Lapus, and Romeo Caronia.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). To the guests of Rep. Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba, thank you for coming and you are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business and for this purpose, may I ask that the Secretary General to be directed to read the same.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Additional Reference of Business.

## 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. 587, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF MRS. LICERNA ROMERICA ABUNDA, THE MOTHER OF HONORABLE MARIA FE R. ABUNDA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF EASTERN SAMAR”

By Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand) and Abante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The Majority Leader is recognized.

## CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 587

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 587. May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). 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. 587, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF MRS. LICERNA ROMERICA ABUNDA, THE MOTHER

OF HONORABLE MARIA FE R. ABUNDA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF EASTERN SAMAR.

## ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 587

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 587.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

House Resolution No. 587 is adopted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, I move to suspend for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:18 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:19 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader, go ahead please.

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BOLILIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, December 10, 2019.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arenas). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is suspended until Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 4:19 p.m.*

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)