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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources	HB 873	Rep. Tiangco	Mandating the establishment of fisherfolk resettlement areas by the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), and the local government units (LGUs), amending for the purpose Section 108 of RA 8550, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leo Rafael Cueva (2 nd District, Negros Occidental), approved HB 873 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 3660	Rep. Aumentado	Prohibiting the use of chlorine in all fishing activities, amending for the purpose Section 92 of RA 10654	The Committee approved HB 3660 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 3784	Rep. Rodriguez	Banning the use of cyanide, dynamite, and all forms of illegal fishing techniques in the live fish trade in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 3784 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 4051	Rep. Fortun	Regulating the catching, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, importation, and exportation of coral reef herbivorous fishes in the Philippines	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 4051.
Basic Education and Culture jt. w/ Higher and Technical Education	HBs 553, 1783, 1788, 2537, 3642, 3712, 4145, 4155, 4262, 4543 & 5449	Reps. Biazon, Espino, Gullas, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Cagas, Aumentado, Barba, Haresco, Deputy Speakers Savellano and Santos-Recto, and Rep. Abaya	Mandating the inclusion of the Reserved Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program in higher educational institutions (HEIs)	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, Chair of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, and Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the 33 measures and to draft a substitute bill. Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN), author of HR 105, followed up her request for an assessment and evaluation report on the implementation of the National Service Training Program (NSTP). Representatives from the Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Education (DepEd), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) committed to submit the requested documents once they are reviewed and signed by the respective heads of these agencies.
	HBs 606, 1118, 1192, 1241, 1309, 2087, 2447, 2559, 2613, 2685, 3181, 3337, 3376, 3497, 3835, 4345 & 5242	Reps. Acop, Tupas, Velasco, Torres-Gomez, Gatchalian, Deputy Speakers Abu and Villafuerte, Reps. Violago, Nograles (J.J.), Chipeco, Tolentino, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Salceda, Sy-Alvarado, Paduano, Tambunting, and Olivarez	Mandating the inclusion of the ROTC program in Grades 11 and 12	Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 nd District, Albay), author of HB 3376, said that these agencies should have given priority to the submission of the reports requested by Rep. Elago, as these will be the basis for determining whether to retain the NSTP or to enact a law that would require the ROTC in senior high school and tertiary level. Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) President Tirso Ronquillo

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture jt. w/ Higher and Technical Education	HBs 2660, 2695, 3230 & 3762	Reps. Albano, Ungab, Umali, and Rodriguez	Instituting the citizen service training course, establishing the citizen service corps, creating the Citizen Service Mobilization Commission, appropriating funds therefor	expressed his support for the bills but recommended that ROTC should not be made mandatory for women. Also expressing their support for the bill were resource persons from the DepEd, DND, CHED, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Association of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCU), and the TechVoc Schools Association (TVSA) of the Philippines. University of the Philippines (UP) Vanguard Chairman of the Board Gilbert Reyes said that his organization prefers a "genuine" citizen service training program which will expand the coverage of the NSTP to include disaster preparedness, community services, and military training. However, Reyes proposed that military training should only be given to students aged 18 and above in line with the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict which the Philippines is a signatory. The Protocol prohibits the conscription into the military of children under the age of 18. The UP Vanguard, Inc. is an alumni organization of Advance Course ROTC graduates of UP. Meanwhile, Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) legal counsel Joseph Noel Estrada explained that the reason for replacing the ROTC with NSTP was because of the irregularities, abuses, corruption, and cover-ups committed during its implementation. He proposed instead to review and revisit the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the NSTP to strengthen the program, taking into consideration the objectives of the bills under review. On the other hand, representatives of student groups including the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), Gabriela Youth, and Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns expressed their objection to the bills. The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.
	HR 105	Rep. Elago	Supporting the unity statement of various student and youth leaders and formations against the implementation of mandatory ROTC in senior high schools	
Climate Change (Special Committee)	HBs 539, 1554 & 5543	Reps. Cabatbat, Garbin, and Rodriguez	Establishing the National Coastal Greenbelt Program, providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Chatto (1 st District, Bohol), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills. Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), author of HB 1554, said that the proposed National Coastal Greenbelt Program establishes a science-based coastal greenbelt involving a 100-meter protection zone initially for the Eastern Pacific seaboard where typhoons make landfall. This coastal greenbelt is expected to protect biodiversity, improve fisheries productivity, and enhance the tourism and livelihood potential of the area.

Continuation... Climate Change (Special Committee)				Supportive of the measure, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) OIC-Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Ricardo Calderon suggested that beach forests and seagrass beds be also planted in the coastal areas, aside from mangroves, because they are also important ecosystems.
	HBs 3136 & 3315	Reps. Acosta-Alba and Villar	Adopting an integrated coastal ecosystem management as a national strategy to ensure the sustainable development of coastal and marine environment and resources, and establishing supporting mechanisms for its implementation, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills.</p> <p>Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Kho sponsored HB 3136 while Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. (Party-List, CWS) sponsored HB 3315 in behalf of the authors, and manifested that the explanatory notes attached to the bills be considered as the authors' respective sponsorship speeches.</p>
	HB 5353	Rep. Castelo	Creating the National Integrated Coastal Ecosystem Development Authority (NICEDA) for the implementation of integrated coastal management programs in the country and providing funds therefor	<p>According to Rep. Chatto, the proposed measures seek to institutionalize an integrated coastal ecosystem management as a national framework or strategy to achieve the following objectives: ensure the sustainable development of the coastal and marine environment of the country; promote food security, gender equality, and respect for sustainable traditional rights of indigenous peoples; alleviate poverty; and reduce vulnerability to climate change as well as human-induced and natural hazards.</p> <p>Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman expressed his support for the bills but suggested that its provisions be aligned with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the CCC's National Climate Change Action Plan, and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP).</p> <p>CCC Undersecretary Noel Gaerlan said that the Commission has formulated and issued a climate risk management framework which should be the basis of all development plans and programs with regard to coastal and marine regulation and protection.</p> <p>The DENR said that enough funding should be provided to ensure the successful implementation of the proposed law. Calderon added that some of the Department's projects and programs on coastal management were previously funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of Foreign Affairs' Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office, National Economic and Development Authority, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, National Housing Authority, Philippine Reclamation Authority, University of the Philippines' Institute of Environmental</p>

Continuation... Climate Change (Special Committee)				Science and Meteorology, and Blue Carbon Specialist expressed their support for the bills.
Economic Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 79, 1310 & 4693	Reps. Salceda, Gatchalian, and Yap (V.)	Establishing the Department of Economics and Development Planning (DEDP) as the economic and development planning agency of the Philippine government, defining its functions, institutionalizing the culture of planning in the government, repealing for the purpose E.O. 230 series of 1987, otherwise known as "Reorganizing the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)," and Book V Title II Subtitle C Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 of E.O. 292 Series of 1987 also known as the "Administrative Code of 1987," and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), approved with amendment the Substitute Bill to HBs 79, 1310, and 4693.</p> <p>The substitute bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.</p> <p>The proposed DEDP will replace the NEDA, which is sought to be abolished under the bill.</p>
Economic Affairs jt. w/ Trade and Industry	HB 11	Rep. Del Mar	Creating the Mega Cebu Development Authority, prescribing its functions and duties, and providing funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Reps. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), Chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs, and Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija), Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Trade and Industry, approved with amendment HB 11.</p> <p>The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means for review of their funding and tax provisions, respectively.</p>
	HBs 263, 264, 655, 3239, 5440, 5538 & 5794	Reps. Ramirez- Sato, Abaya, Salimbangon, Gasataya, Aumentado, and Baronda	Establishing special economic zones and free ports in certain parts of the country, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee approved with amendment the seven bills.</p> <p>The bills will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means for review of their funding and tax provisions, respectively.</p>
Energy	HB 3031	Rep. Velasco	Ordaining the development of the downstream natural gas industry, consolidating for the purpose all laws relating to the transmission, distribution and supply of natural gas	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), will deliberate further on HB 3031 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) sponsored the bill in behalf of the author, Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco. He underscored the need to develop the Philippine downstream natural gas industry (PDNGI) as the country's ancillary power source considering the worldwide trend of shifting from fossil fuel to renewable natural gas as source of energy. This is to balance the country's mixed energy resources in the medium and long-term.</p> <p>Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay), co-author of HB 3031, said that the proposed law aims to create a legislative framework that would provide favorable conditions towards the rapid development of the country's natural gas industry. He also said that in response to the depleting supply of natural gas in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project, the proposed</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>law intends to increase the country's base-load of natural gas supply, both off-shore and in-land, through policies that would attract foreign investments. The country is not financially capable to sustain this industry on its own which would approximately cost \$1 trillion, he added.</p> <p>The successful launching of the Malampaya project in 2001 marked the birth of the natural gas industry in the Philippines. It is a public-private partnership between the Philippine government and Shell Philippines Exploration B.V., under a service contract which is due to expire by 2024. A request for the extension of the service contract is currently under evaluation by the Department of Energy (DOE).</p> <p>DOE Assistant Secretary Leonido Pulido III recommended the inclusion of a provision in the bill extending financial support or incentives to industries involved in natural gas production or utilization. He also committed to submit to the Committee the DOE's official position paper on the bill, as well as its master plan for the development of the country's natural gas industry as soon as they are finalized.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the Committee's reference in its deliberations on the bill.</p>
Local Government	HBs 1051 & 3148	Reps. Loyola and Romulo	Exempting from the population and land area requirements the conversion of a municipality into a component city if it has a locally generated average annual income of at least P250 million and adopting internal revenue allotment (IRA) portability for every subsequent conversion of a municipality into a city, amending for such purpose Section 450 of RA 7160	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3 rd District, Tarlac), approved HBs 1051 and 3148. The Secretariat was directed to prepare a substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 3405	Rep. Mangudadatu	Creating the Province of Maguindanao North	The Committee approved HBs 3405 and 4840. The Secretariat was directed to prepare a substitute bill for the two bills and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 4840	Rep. Sinsuat	Creating the Province of Western Maguindanao	
	HB 4123	Rep. Fortun	Reapportioning the First Legislative District and Second Legislative District of Agusan del Norte into the Lone Legislative District of Butuan City and the Lone Legislative District of the Province of Agusan del Norte, respectively	The Committee approved HB 4123.
	HBs 627, 3236 & 3522	Reps. Almario, Sarmiento, and Gaité	Reverting to the national government the discharge of basic health services devolved to local government units (LGUs), repealing for the purpose pertinent sections of RA 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate HBs 627, 3236 and 3522 and to deliberate on these bills in a joint meeting with the Committee on Health to thresh out issues regarding the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Joel Mayo Almario (2nd District, Davao Oriental), Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Western Samar), and Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), authors of</p>

Continuation... Local Government				<p>HBs 627, 3236 and 3522, respectively, recognize that the devolution of the delivery of basic health services to local government units (LGUs) has resulted in the ineffective and inefficient delivery of public health service. This can be attributed to the LGUs' inability to adequately fund the needed health services considering their limited income and the change in leadership every three years which affects the policy direction of the health sector at the local level.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) and several Members expressed support for the proposed law. The Deputy Speaker said that the delivery of basic health services is one of the most difficult and most expensive programs to manage and sustain. Hence, it is more practical to revert the delivery of basic health services to the national government, directly under the Department of Health (DOH), which is more capable of undertaking such mandate.</p> <p>Also in support of the measure were representatives from the Filipino Nurse United, Committee Medicine Development Foundation (COMMED), and the Local Health System Regional Coordinator for CALABARZON.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite representatives from the Departments of Budget and Management (DBM), Finance (DOF), Health (DOH), and the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to attend the next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.</p>
	HB 337	Rep. Nograles (J.F.F.)	Renaming the Municipality of Rodriguez to the Municipality of Montalban	The Committee deferred deliberation on HB 337 pending the submission of the comments from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.
	HBs 3235, 3827 & 4027	Reps. Sarmiento, Rodriguez, and Garin (S.)	Reverting to the national government the discharge of basic agricultural functions and responsibilities devolved to local government units, amending for the purpose RA 7160	The Committee suspended its deliberations on HBs 3235, 3827 and 4027.
	HB 5077	Rep. Ermita-Buhain	Converting the Municipality of Calaca in the Province of Batangas into a component city to be known as the City of Calaca	The Committee deferred its deliberations on HB 5077.
Overseas Workers Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 1812 & 5097	Reps. Pacquiao (R.) and Yap (V.)	Expanding the use of the Legal Assistance Fund, amending for the purpose Section 26 of RA 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 1812 and 5097.
	HBs 234, 277 & 4156	Reps. Vargas, Aglipay, and Haresco	Providing an assistance program for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in distress, both documented and undocumented, providing funds therefor	The Committee will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting.

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs				<p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Sarah Lou Arriola and Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Budget and Management Bureau-B Director Mary Ann dela Vega expressed their support for the bills but advised that the proposed law be harmonized with HB 5832 which provides for the creation of a new Department for Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment. HB 5832 is under the period of interpellation at the Plenary.</p> <p>Dela Vega added that the funds needed to implement the proposed law may be sourced from the DFA.</p> <p>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Bernard Olalia also expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
Public Order and Safety jt. w/ National Defense and Security	<p>HB 482</p> <p>HBs 551, 2082, 2847, 3103, 3413 & 5710</p>	<p>Rep. Brosas</p> <p>Reps. Biazon, Nograles (J.J.), Deputy Speakers Villafuerte and Romero, Reps. Tulfo and Bolilia</p>	<p>Repealing RA 9372, otherwise known as the Human Security Act of 2007</p> <p>Amending certain provisions of RA 9372 (by addressing the gaps, lapses, and inadequacies of the law)</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), Chair of the Committee on Public Order and Safety, and Rep. Raul "Boboy" Tupas (5th District, Iloilo), Chair of the Committee on National Defense and Security, agreed to consolidate the seven bills.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HB 482, is seeking the repeal of RA 9372 or the Human Security Act of 2007 for not being effective in combating terrorism. She also stressed that the law is being used against certain party-list groups, such as the Gabriela Women's Party, falsely tagging them as terrorists, thus threatening the fundamental rights and civil liberties of affected individuals.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon and Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA), respective authors of HBs 551 and 2082, and Rep. Niña Taduran (Party-List, ACT-CIS), co-author of HB 3413, expressed the need to amend and update the Human Security Act to address the gaps identified since its implementation in 2007 and to be more responsive in fighting new threats to human and national security.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Bureau of Immigration (BI), National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), National Security Council (NSC), Anti-Money Laundering Council (ALC), and the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>The DOJ, Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>

Continuation... Public Order and Safety jt. w/ National Defense and Security				Deputy Speaker Henry Oaminal (2 nd District, Misamis Occidental) said that in the next meeting of the Committee, the Cabinet Secretaries should be invited because their views are important on such an important issue as national security.
Trade and Industry	Substitute Bill to HBs 3255, 4199, 4552 & 5060	Reps. Silverio, Romualdo, Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto, and Rep. Agabas	Providing for the establishment of <i>Timbangan Ng Bayan</i> centers in all markets nationwide, amending for the purpose Chapter II of RA 7394, otherwise known as the Consumer Act of the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), approved the Substitute Bill. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Gatchalian and Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, author of HB 4199, mentioned that a bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The bill seeks to mandate local government units, through the assistance of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), to establish <i>Timbangan Ng Bayan</i> centers in all public and private markets nationwide. These centers will have instruments for determining weights and measures which shall be accessible to any person who needs to verify the accuracy of the quantity and measurements of the products.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Human Rights (Technical Working Group)	HBs 55, 487, 522, 1579 & 4586	Reps. Cabochan, Deloso- Montalla, Aglipay, Hataman, and Belmonte	Prohibiting racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), terminated its deliberation on the five bills.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to come up with a substitute bill using HBs 487 and 1579 as the working draft, taking into consideration the comments and suggestions of the resource persons. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), co-author of HB 1579, and Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) informed the TWG that a similar bill was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the TWG meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include as "prohibited acts of discrimination" expelling a student on grounds of having disabilities and the failure of establishments to make their facilities accessible to persons with disabilities (PWDs); • Authorize the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to promulgate the appropriate rules and regulations in the

Continuation... Human Rights (Technical Working Group)				<p>investigation of discrimination cases and the accreditation of lawyers who will accept <i>pro bono</i> cases; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoin the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to promote cultural diversity in schools.
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 922	Rep. Fernando	Regulating the use of roads for safe, fast, and economic transport	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco, will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG thoroughly discussed Sections 1 to 16 of the bill. Among the agreements reached during the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include the Land Transportation Office (LTO) and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) among the agencies that will be involved in the establishment and enforcement of traffic regulations; To design roads depending on the requirements of a particular area; and To authorize the local government unit to issue the locational clearance for projects involving one or two residential units; and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) for projects involving 20 or more units. (Under the bill, a Traffic Impact Assessment is required on all buildings and establishments prior to the issuance of a locational clearance, which is a prerequisite for the issuance of a building permit.) <p>On the prohibition against parking of vehicles on any roadway, government or private, all over the country, Subdivision and Housing Developers Association (SHDA) Executive Director Sonny Ducay suggested that homeowners be allowed to park their vehicles on private roads inside subdivisions, especially in socialized housing areas where lot sizes are small.</p> <p>Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City), author of HB 922, asserted that all roads should be cleared of parked vehicles and there should be no exemption even in socialized housing areas.</p> <p>With regard to the prohibition on using roads for drying palay and other crops, which is common in the provinces, Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon) said that to ensure that this provision will be observed, the government should provide alternatives such as solar dryers for use by farmers in drying their crops.</p> <p>The SHDA, Federation of Private Residents Association, and Alliance of Quezon City Homeowners Association will submit their suggested definition of “private road” for consideration of the TWG.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	Briefing on the financial performance of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), will continue with its discussion on PAGCOR's financial performance in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Garin said that the Committee wants to have clear picture of PAGCOR's revenue flow and to identify opportunities for growth in the agency's performance and revenue generation and collection for the benefit of the country and the Filipino people.</p> <p>PAGCOR Assistant Vice President Sharon Quintanilla submitted a report on PAGCOR's income performance. However, the Committee Members said that the report fell short of details that are needed to facilitate discussion on the matter. PAGCOR was then instructed to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed financial report for the years 2015-2018; • Contracts of and all relevant information concerning all PAGCOR licensed casinos and Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs); and • Audited financial reports for the past five years. <p>Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4th District, Quezon City) asked PAGCOR to determine whether or not the revenues the government gets from POGO's outweigh the displacement of Filipino workers. He lamented that POGO's mostly hire Chinese nationals thus giving them more economic opportunities and purchasing power to the detriment of Filipino workers.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) expressed his concern over reports that licensed casinos are outperforming PAGCOR-owned ones. He asked PAGCOR to apprise the Committee of the agency's plans and projections for its casino operations in Metro Manila. PAGCOR legal counsel Mae Lyn Almonte promised to submit relevant documents on the matter before the Committee's next meeting.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Trade and Industry	Briefing by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on its proposed amendments to RA 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss the DTI's proposed amendments to RA 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines.</p> <p>Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary for Consumer Protection Group (CPG) Ruth Castelo said that amendments to RA 7394 are necessary to modernize and to broaden the scope of the existing law on consumer protection.</p> <p>Among the amendments proposed by Castelo were to specify the rights of consumers and to include "juridical persons" in the definition of "consumer." RA 7394 defines "consumer" as "a natural person who is a purchaser, lessee, recipient or prospective purchaser, lessor or recipient of consumer products, services or credit."</p> <p>Due to time constraints, the DTI was asked to present all its amendments in the upcoming TWG meetings.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Overseas Workers Affairs	<p>Updates on the following cases and concerns affecting the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plight of OFWs in China, Hong Kong, and Macau in light of the 2019-nCoV outbreak Plight of OFWs in Iraq and other countries in the Middle East in view of the tension between Iran and the United States Maltreatment/abuse of OFW Jeanelyn Villavende, a household service worker, by her employer in Kuwait that led to her death 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), discussed with various government agencies the plight of OFWs in China and its Special Administrative Regions in light of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak, the current situation of OFWs in Iraq and in other countries in the Middle East due to US-Iran tension, questions about the circumstances behind the deaths of Jeanelyn Villavende and Mary Jane Reyes, and the illegal recruitment of Jerson Enriquez and his companions.</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Sarah Lou Arriola reported that as of February 9, there were 30 Filipinos repatriated from the Province of Hubei, China who were turned over to the Department of Health (DOH) at New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac. (The City of Wuhan where the 2019-nCoV originated is the capital of Hubei Province.)</p> <p>Since January 28, upon the President's directive, the DFA temporarily suspended the issuance of visas to foreign nationals directly coming from China and its Special Administrative Regions, and foreign nationals, who within 14 days immediately preceding arrival in the country, have been to China and its Special Administrative Regions. Likewise, the DFA advised visa-free nationals, who fall under the abovementioned categories, about the Philippines' temporary travel ban.</p> <p>DOH Health Emergency Management Bureau Director Gloria Balboa said that DOH, being the government agency that takes the lead in the management of nCoV, is monitoring and gathering data to fully study the virus and give appropriate information as well as primary care to the people.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza suggested that the DOH should put in place measures that will assure the Filipino people that the government is doing everything for their safety and well-being.</p> <p>Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, who was designated as the country's Special Envoy to the Middle East to oversee repatriation of OFWs, reported that the situation in Baghdad, Iraq is difficult to predict. He said the government has already repatriated 36 OFWs but would still need to conduct more repatriations before the situation in the region worsens. He disclosed that the security level in Iraq is now at Alarm Level 4, wherein there are no serious skirmishes yet.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza asked about the reports that OFWs do not want to be repatriated despite the dangerous situation in Iraq. Cimatu confirmed the reports and explained that the apprehension of the OFWs stems from their fear of losing their jobs and be unemployed when they go back to the Philippines.</p> <p>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Hans Cacdac informed the Committee of the government's programs for returning OFWs, some of which are the following: grant of cash and livelihood assistance; job referrals; possible employment in the government's "Build, Build, Build" Program; and enrolment in skills training of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).</p> <p>National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Deputy Director Ferdinand Lavin read the autopsy report on Villavende stating that the victim suffered from sexual abuse, maltreatment, malnutrition, laceration, hematoma, and abrasions.</p>

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case of OFW Mary Jane Reyes, a domestic worker in Abu Dhabi, UAE, who allegedly died of suffocation • Alleged illegal recruitment of OFW Jerson Enriquez and 14 others in Saudi Arabia 	<p>Rep. Mendoza asked about the alleged offering of blood money (or money paid for the family of a murdered victim) to the family of Villavende. Arriola said that the family of Villavende is not accepting the offer because they want justice to be served through the execution of the accused.</p> <p>Arriola conveyed the DFA's support for the total deployment ban of household service workers in Kuwait. She added that the government is doing everything it can to render justice for the death of Villavende.</p> <p>Dr. Carlo Yalong of the NBI reported that based on the autopsy report on the body of Mary Jane Reyes, there was no evidence of physical injury from head to toe. The muscles of Reyes have a bloody cherry red coloration which is an indication that the cause of her death is suffocation or carbon monoxide poisoning, Yalong added.</p> <p>At that time, the temperature in Abu Dhabi was about 7 to 11 degrees Celsius, which was very cold. Reyes was not allowed to use the heater in the room so she made fire out of charcoal to keep her warm not knowing that the fumes will be the cause of her death.</p> <p>Abdul Khaled Tamano, President of the International Experts for Technical Support Services (IETSS), the recruiter of Enriquez and 14 other Filipinos, apprised the Committee that the IETSS was able to facilitate the return to the country of four OFWs who were deployed to Saudi Arabia. Tamano said that another batch is going home this week and he promised that Enriquez will be included in this batch. On the other hand, some of these OFWs did not want to go back to the Philippines and decided to transfer to other employers.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza asked whether these OFWs have compulsory insurance coverage. Center for Migrant Advocacy Philippines Executive Director Elle Sana said that there is a \$100 allotted insurance money per OFW.</p> <p>Section 37-A of RA 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended, provides that each migrant worker deployed by a recruitment/manning agency shall be covered by a compulsory insurance policy which shall be secured at no cost to the worker. The insurance policy shall cover, among others, "the subsistence allowance benefit, with at least US\$100 per month for a maximum of six months for a migrant worker who is involved in a case or litigation, for the protection of his/her rights in the receiving country."</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza asked IETSS whether or not the subject OFWs have received the money out of their insurance benefits. Tamano said that he is not in the position to answer the question.</p> <p>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Bernard Olalia said that the company should inform the OFWs with regard to this insurance benefit. If IETSS fails to do so, it will remain suspended and probably face another case.</p>
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