



ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ethics and Privileges	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Internal Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (Nueva Ecija, 3rd District), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Internal Rules of Procedure for the 18th Congress was adopted, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Among the amendments to the Committee's Internal Rules of Procedures for the 18th Congress were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provision on <i>motu proprio</i> under the Rules of the House shall be adopted, which states that "committees may also, <i>motu proprio</i>, upon a majority vote of all their Members, conduct hearings and inquiries on issues and concerns within their respective jurisdictions"; and• Complaints shall not be accepted by the Committee 90 days prior to the date of national and local elections when the subject of the complaint is a candidate in the said election. <p>Acting Committee Secretary Amado Caballero also presented the Committee's accomplishments during the 17th Congress and gave an overview on the conduct of its proceedings.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee which is composed of 25 members, has jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to the duties, conduct, rights, privileges and immunities, dignity, integrity and reputation of the House and its Members."</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HBs 1205, 1958, 3470 & 3596	Reps. Arroyo, Cabochan, Villaraza-Suarez, and Garin (S.)	Institutionalizing the Young Farmers Program, providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1 st District, Quezon), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss the bills further.
	HBs 1275, 2030 & 4202	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Sy-Alvarado, and Vargas	Encouraging youth sector participation in the agricultural sector, establishing for the purpose a <i>Tulong Kabataan Sa Agrikultura</i> Program and a <i>Tulong Kabataan Sa Agrikultura</i> Trust Fund, appropriating funds therefor	Rep. Angelo Marcos Barba (2 nd District, Ilocos Norte) was designated as head of the TWG.
	HB 1997	Rep. De Venecia	Providing for the Magna Carta of Young Farmers	Rep. Enverga and Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), author of HB 1958, expressed their concern over the declining interest of the youth to work in the agriculture sector. Rep. Cabochan observed that over the past few decades, the youth have shifted their employment preference from the farm and fisheries sector to jobs in the cities.
	HB 5065	Rep. Nieto	Creating the National Youth Agripreneurship Program and providing funds thereof	Rep. Barba, author of HB 5280, fears that having fewer young people engaged in agriculture will adversely affect the country's food security and self-sufficiency.
	HB 5280	Rep. Barba	Establishing Young Farmers Challenge Program, creating the Young Farmers Challenge Council, appropriating funds therefor	Rep. David "Jay-Jay" Suarez (2 nd District, Quezon), co-author of HB 3470, along with

Continuation... Agriculture and Food				<p>other Committee Members urged government agencies to revisit their existing programs on agriculture and to put in place appropriate interventions to invigorate the interest of the youth towards the agriculture and fisheries sectors.</p> <p>Professional Regulation Commission's (PRC) Board of Agriculture (DA) Deputy Commissioner Sonny Domingo said that the government must also assist graduates of agriculture and fisheries courses to find jobs relevant to their academic background.</p> <p>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) parliamentary specialist Patrick Velez said that labor migration in the agriculture and fisheries sector is a real problem. Velez added that aside from providing farmers with technical skills, there is an even greater need to provide lands for the farmers and those who have gained knowledge in farming. This view was supported by Party-List Reps. Eufemia "Ka Femia" Cullamat (BAYAN MUNA) and Argel Joseph Cabatbat (MAGSASAKA).</p> <p>Department of Agriculture-High Value Crops and Rural Credit (DA-HVCRC) Executive Assistant Joycel Panlilio informed the Committee that the DA has a similar initiative called <i>Gulayan sa Paaralan</i> Project (GPP), which aims to boost the awareness of young children of the significance of growing vegetables.</p> <p>Rep. Sharee Ann Tan (2nd District, Samar) said that government interventions should also include the provision of roads and transportation leading to and from the farm to allow the farmers to have greater access to the market.</p> <p>Also during the meeting, the Committee created the Subcommittee on Rice as per instruction of Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1st District, Taguig City-Pateros). Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Antonio "Tonypet" Albano (1st District, Isabela), was designated as head of the Subcommittee.</p>
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HB 2650	Rep. Canama	Mandating the representation of cooperatives in the Board of Directors of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), amending for the purpose RA 3844, or the Agricultural Land Reform Code, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss the bill further.</p> <p>Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), author of HB 2650, said that his bill seeks to provide two seats to represent the cooperatives in the Board of Directors of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), one coming from an organized agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB) farmers cooperative and the other from the national cooperative federations/unions. He said the existing composition of the Board only has a representative of the ARBs and not the cooperatives.</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Luis Meinrado Pañgulayan expressed support for the bill saying that the Philippine Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), which he serves as Secretary, has a list of ARBs, ARB cooperatives, and cooperatives that are performing well. He said that the PARC Executive Committee can provide such list to help prepare the shortlist of nominees to the LBP's Board.</p> <p>LBP Strategic Planning Group Head Elcid Pangilinan expressed support for the bill but advised that the nominees should possess the necessary qualifications to be a member of the LBP's Board.</p> <p>Rep. Canama said that a shortlist of nominees from the ARB cooperatives and from the national federation of cooperatives will be submitted to the Office of the President (OP) for evaluation and approval.</p>
	HB 1757	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Making automated teller machines (ATMs) accessible to the visually-impaired individuals	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss the bills further.</p>
	HB 2507	Rep. Vargas	Requiring certain financial institutions to post transaction fees for each ATM transaction and restricting transaction fees for ATMs	<p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) sponsored HB 1757 in behalf of the author, Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur). Rep. Garin said that HB 1757 provides standards for ATMs to make them accessible to those who are visually-impaired.</p>
	HBs 4019, 4850 & 5238	Reps. Zarate, Castelo, and Yap (V.)	Regulating the rate of fees and charges that banks and financial institutions impose on ATM transactions	<p>On the other hand, HBs 2507, 4019, 4850, and 5238 focus on the regulation of the fees and charges that financial institutions impose on the public for the use of ATMs.</p> <p>Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Cezar Consing said that as a general rule, banks do not charge their own clients for using their ATMs. They, however, charge the clients of other banks who use their ATMs to undertake bank transactions.</p> <p>Consing added that most of the smaller banks rely on large banks, such as Banco de Oro (BDO), BPI, LBP, Metrobank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC), and Philippine National Bank (PNB), to provide the ATMs, which their clients could also use. However, the cost of one ATM ranges from P600,000 to P650,000 and its maintenance would cost about P40,000-P55,000 per month. Consing said that another P200,000 per ATM is needed to upgrade the machines to make them accessible to hearing-impaired clients.</p> <p>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Managing Director for the Financial Technology Sub-sector Vicente de Villa III expressed support for the bills but advised that the Committee should also consider the financial implications of the proposed measures.</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				On the query of Rep. Cua, De Villa said the BSP regulates, evaluates, and scrutinizes the fees and charges proposed by the banks.
Economic Affairs	HBs 79, 1310 & 4693	Reps. Salceda, Gatchalian, and Yap (V.)	Institutionalizing the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as the independent economic and planning agency of the Philippine government, defining its functions, and appropriating funds therefor, repealing for the purpose EO 230 series of 1987, also known as the NEDA Reorganization Act	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), approved HB 79, in consolidation with HBs 1310 and 4693. Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan (2 nd District, Ilocos Sur) invoked Sec. 48, Rule 10 of the Rules of the House which states that priority measures which were previously filed in the immediately preceding Congress and approved on third reading may be disposed of as matters already reported, upon the approval of majority of the Members of the Committee present.
Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 123	Deputy Speaker Fernandez	Establishing the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) – Santa Rosa branch in the City of Santa Rosa, Province of Laguna, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2104	Rep. Malapitan	Establishing a campus of the PUP in Caloocan City - North to be known as the PUP Caloocan City – North Campus and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 209; 423; 623; 681; 1232; 1711; 2228; 2288; 2306; 2377; 2406; 2454- 2457; 2495; 2711, 2953; 3118; 3188; & 3226	Deputy Speaker Puno, Reps. Rodriguez, Marquez, Violago, Espina, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Matugas, Dimaporo (M.K.), Castelo, Robes, Suansing (E.), Tan (A.), Madrona, Cuaresma, Calderon, Tejada, Chatto, and Acosta	Providing for the establishment of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training and accreditation centers in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Reports on the substitute bills to the 21 bills.
	Substitute Bill to HB 1529	Rep. Salceda	Appropriating funds for the establishment of the Bicol University (BU)-East Campus Physical Development Plan and construction of the school facilities inside the BU-East Campus	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	HB 573	Rep. Gasataya	Recruiting, hiring, and training additional university-based mental health personnel	The Committee approved HB 573 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 3978	Rep. Dimaporo (A.)	Establishing the Mindanao State University (MSU)-Lanao del Norte Agricultural College Arboretum in Barangay Ragain, Municipality of Sultan Naga Dimaporo and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 3978 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	HB 2720	Rep. Gonzaga	Establishing additional branches of the Compostela Valley State College in certain municipalities of Compostela Valley, thereby amending RA 10958 and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2720 subject to style and amendment. It also agreed to conduct an ocular inspection of the school jointly with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
	HBs 3232, 3509, 4617 & 4935	Reps. Sarmiento, Calderon, Peña, and Kho (W.)	Establishing Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training and assessment centers in certain parts of the country, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the four bills subject to style and amendment.
	HB 4686	Rep. Teves (J.)	Converting the Cabugao School of Handicraft and Cottage Industries (CSHCI)-Cabugao Campus located in the Municipality of Bato, Catanduanes into TESDA-Supervised School to be known as the Catanduanes Polytechnic Skills Development Institute and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HBs 4686 and 5131 and directed the Secretariat to prepare a substitute bill.
	HB 5131	Rep. Sanchez	Converting the Cabugao School of Handicraft and Cottage Industries into a polytechnic institute to be known as Catanduanes Polytechnic Skills Development Institute and appropriating funds therefor	
	HBs 2737 & 3237	Reps. Rodriguez and Dimaporo (A.)	Strengthening the Mindanao State University System and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a substitute bill to the two bills, taking into consideration the recommendations of the resource persons.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Western Samar).</p> <p>MSU Vice President for Finance Jamaloden Basar expressed his appreciation for the legislative proposals that will strengthen the MSU system, saying that the last amendment to its charter only pertains to the mode of appointing the president of the MSU System. He informed the Committee that the MSU will submit specific recommendations for the consideration of the TWG.</p>
	HB 4783	Rep. Gato	Converting the Batanes State College (BSC) in the Province of Batanes into a state university to be known as the Batanes State University, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on the bill.</p> <p>Batanes Rep. Ciriaco Gato Jr., author of HB 4783, said that it is high time to establish the first university in Batanes that will provide the Ivatans an advanced or higher education and training in different fields.</p> <p>BSC President Alfonso Simon stated that converting BSC to a university will provide better opportunities for the Iwatan youth and help relieve parents of the financial burden of sending their children to universities outside the province.</p> <p>CHED representative Rita Cescar stated that the requirements for a university status are tedious and entail huge funding. She also noted that BSC is not offering any graduate</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>program, which does not meet one of the CHED's requirements for conversion - a Level III accreditation of two of the school's graduate programs.</p> <p>Rep. Go suggested that instead of converting BSC into a university, the Committee may just consider recommending an increase in its budget to hire additional faculty members and employees and expand its programs.</p>
Human Rights	HBs 486, 1532, 4649 & 5279	Reps. Deloso-Montalla, Nograles (J.J.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, and Rep. Belmonte	Providing a framework for the right to adequate food, and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4th District, Quezon City), approved the four bills. The Secretariat was instructed to consolidate and harmonize the measures and to come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>A bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), author of HB 486, explained the importance of enacting a law that will ensure adequate food for every Filipino, thereby addressing the incidence of hunger in the country.</p> <p>As stated in Section 2, Declaration of Policy, of the bill, "Adequate food is not a matter of charity, but a legal entitlement. Hunger is inconsistent with human dignity and human rights, and must be eliminated. The State shall provide for a framework to address and eliminate hunger in an organized manner."</p> <p>Expressing support for the passage of the proposed law were representatives from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and National Food Coalition (NFC).</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
Justice	HB 4553	Rep. Veloso	Amending Article 70 of Act No. 3815, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code (RPC) (by repealing the 5th paragraph of Article 70 which provides that the maximum period of the convict's sentence shall not exceed 40 years)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3 rd District, Leyte), approved the Committee Report on HB 4553.
	HBs 376, 393, 572, 628, 724, 4190, 4714, 727, and 2005	Reps. Olivarez, Ferrer (L.), Gasataya, Almario, Torres-Gomez, Jalosjos, and Vargas	Creating additional branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), Municipal Trial Court (MTC), and Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC) in various parts of the country, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Reports on the bills.
	HBs 2423, 2510, 2523, 2655, 2668,	Reps. Labadlabad, Benitez, Bolilia,	Creating additional branches of the RTC and MTC in various parts of the country, amending for the purpose Batas	The Committee approved the eight bills with amendments.

Continuation... Justice	2698, 2884 & 2954	Bernos, Alvarez (G.), Panotes, Malapitan, and Calderon	Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	The Secretariat was directed to draft the corresponding Committee Reports.
	HBs 2088, 3995, 4150 & 5465	Deputy Speaker Abu, Reps. Agabas and Haresco	Providing support for the surviving spouse and children of slain judges, justices, and other judiciary officials	The Committee approved the bills. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report on the consolidated version of the bills.
	HBs 597, 1603 & 2716	Reps. Silverio, Castelo, and Gonzaga	Granting hazard pay to RTC judges during their incumbency and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bills. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report on the consolidated version of the bills.
	HB 2327	Deputy Speaker Escudero	Amending Sections 2 and 5 of RA 9227, or the law granting additional compensation in the form of special allowances for justices, judges, and all other positions in the judiciary with the equivalent rank of justices of the court of appeals and judges of the RTC (by granting the special allowance provided under RA 9227 to those who have retired prior to November 11, 2003, the effectivity date of RA 9227 thereby increasing their retirement gratuities)	
	HBs 4745, 4806, 4809, 4943, 5019, 5078 & 5348	Deputy Speakers Oaminal and Romero, Reps. Velasco, Olivarez, Rodriguez, Nograles (J.J.), and Gonzaga	Strengthening the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel by rationalizing and further professionalizing its organization, upgrading positions, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bills. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report on the consolidated version of the bills.

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agriculture and Food	Briefing by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) on the falling prices of copra	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfredo Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), listened to the briefing by the PCA on the falling prices of copra.</p> <p>PCA OIC Deputy Administrator Erlene Manohar explained that the decrease in the price of copra is a worldwide trend due to the oversupply of vegetable oils, particularly palm oil, in the world market. Palm oil is a lot cheaper than coconut oil and is taking a huge chunk of the market displacing coconut oil and copra. As a result, Manohar said that 2.6 million coconut farmers are suffering from meager income and government is losing billions of pesos in revenues.</p> <p>To address this pressing concern, the PCA has resolved to implement programs such as direct copra marketing and incentive-based planting/replanting. The PCA is also pursuing its proposal to increase biodiesel blends in fuel from 2% (B2) to 5% (B5) to create an additional demand for coconut oil.</p> <p>University of the Philippines (UP) Economics Professor Ramon Clarete said that there is also a need to improve the quality of the country's coconut oil to make it globally competitive and at par with international standards.</p> <p>Coconut Industry Reform (COIR) Movement Inc. Executive Director Joey Faustino suggested that farmers should venture into the production of</p>

Continuation... Agriculture and Food		other coconut-based products aside from copra. He said farmers have been too focused on copra and have completely ignored the possibility of making other coconut-based products such as coconut milk and coco sugar. Former Anakpawis Party-List Rep. Rafael Mariano agreed to this proposal.
Economic Affairs	Briefing by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on the prospects of the Philippine economy and on the directions, policies, and legislative agenda of the Duterte administration	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), listened to the briefing conducted by NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon.</p> <p>The Undersecretary said that President Duterte's agenda for change translates to relevant improvement in the quality, access and delivery of services. Towards this end, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 Strategic Framework was crafted to lay down the foundation for an inclusive growth, a high-thrust and resilient society, and a globally competitive economy.</p> <p>According to Edillon, the PDP has 21 chapters and each has its own indicators. But NEDA currently focuses on the following indicators: economic growth, poverty incidence, food inflation, employment, and global innovation.</p> <p>Reporting on the country's economic growth, Edillon admitted that for 2017 and 2018, gross domestic product growth rate fell short of the country's target of 6.5%-7.5% and 7.0%-8.0%, respectively. However, she said that by all indications, the country will be able to meet its target for 2019.</p> <p>With regard to the food inflation rate, Edillon reported that it rose to 6.6% in 2018, which was way above the target of 2.7%. However, from January to October 2019, the food inflation rate was kept stable at 1.9%.</p> <p>Relative to the goal of reducing poverty incidence, Edillon expressed confidence that the country will be able to meet its target, citing positive numbers based on the first half of 2018.</p> <p>Likewise, Edillon said that unemployment rate for the first three quarters of this year decreased to 5.2% from 5.3% last year. She added that the country was able to generate more than 1.087 million jobs during the same period.</p> <p>Edillon also mentioned that the country's global innovation index largely improved, with the Philippines now ranked 54th out of 129 economies compared to 73rd out of 126 economies in 2018.</p> <p>For the 18th Congress, Edillon cited the legislative measures that the NEDA supports and currently pursues, some of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Government Act; • Budget Modernization Act; • Freedom of Information Act; • Salary Standardization V; and • Amendment of the Consumer Act and the Retail Trade Act.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development	<p>Briefing on the plans and programs for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by the following agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Corporation (SB Corp.) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), listened to the briefing on the plans and programs for MSMEs by concerned agencies.</p> <p>SB Corp. President and CEO Ma. Luna Cacanando informed the body that SB Corp. is a non-bank government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) attached to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Under RA 9501 (Magna Carta for MSMEs), SB Corp. is mandated to "source and adopt development initiatives for globally competitive MSMEs in finance and business technologies; extend all forms of financial assistance to eligible MSMEs; and engage in wholesale lending."</p>

<p>Continuation... Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) 	<p>Cacanando presented SB Corp.'s lending programs such as the Enterprise Rehabilitation Fund (ERF), which extends loans to MSMEs affected by natural disasters and calamities including those severely damaged by Typhoon Yolanda. Another program she mentioned was the <i>Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso</i> (P3) Program, which provides loans to micro enterprises with asset size not exceeding P3 million and with at least one year of continuing business or livelihood operation. SB Corp. charges 2.5% per month on P3 loans to cover interest and service charges.</p> <p>Replying to the comment of Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) that the P3 loan interest rate is too high, Cacanando explained that the SB Corp. lends the money to its conduits, such as rural banks and cooperatives, at 2% annual interest rate. In turn, the conduits charge a higher interest rate to the MSMEs to cover the transaction costs.</p> <p>The Members suggested that SB Corp. should find ways to lower the interest rate without hurting the viability of the program. SB Corp. was also requested to submit its financial statements and relevant information pertaining to its conduits.</p> <p>Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar) suggested to the Committee to invite microfinance institutions (MFIs) in its next meeting.</p> <p>DOST Undersecretary for Regional Operations Brenda Nazareth-Manzano presented its Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP), which enhances the competitiveness of MSMEs through the aid of science and technology (S&T).</p> <p>According to Nazareth-Manzano, the S&T interventions offered by the program to address MSMEs' technical problems and improve productivity and efficiency are the following: infusion of new and advanced technologies; provision of seed funds for technology acquisition and equipment upgrading; technical trainings; technical advisory and consultancy services; design of packages and labels; support in the establishment of product standard including testing and calibration; and database information system.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Ruth Mariano-Hernandez (2nd District, Laguna), Nazareth-Manzano said that the DOST is collaborating with other concerned agencies to introduce the program to the public.</p> <p>DOLE's National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) Deputy Executive Director Patricia Hornilla said the NWPC provides technical assistance to MSMEs to improve their productivity and competitiveness.</p> <p>DOLE's Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC) Supervising Labor Employment Officer Juliet Boricua presented the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) or <i>Kabuhayan</i> Program, a flagship program of the DOLE that provides grant assistance for capacity-building on livelihood and entrepreneurial ventures for vulnerable and marginalized workers.</p> <p>Boricua said that the <i>Kabuhayan</i> Program offers DILP beneficiaries with the following services: assistance packages in the form of raw materials, equipment, and tools, and other services necessary in setting up a business; training on business planning, basic entrepreneurship development, workers' safety and health, and production skills; and technical and business advisory.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DOLE's Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) Labor and Employment Officer Mark Falcunitin said that the DOLE, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), conducts the <i>Trabaho Negosyo Kabuhayan</i> (TNK) job and business fair as a strategy to expand opportunities in industry and services. Both the DOLE and the DTI are working together to: mainstream TNK in local development plans; link the</p>
---	--	---

<p>Continuation... Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) 	<p>MSMEs to higher value chain; and transition projects to entrepreneurship undertaking with a formal business model.</p> <p>DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) Director Restituto Macuto showed a video presentation on the SLP and gave a report on the status of implementation of the DSWD's livelihood programs for peace and development and for post-disaster rehabilitation.</p> <p>The SLP is a capability building program for poor, vulnerable and marginalized households and communities to help improve their socio-economic conditions through accessing and acquiring necessary assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods.</p> <p>Rep. Lacson is optimistic that the livelihood projects of the DOLE and DSWD would evolve into real businesses or MSMEs with the help of the DTI and SB Corp.</p>
<p>Poverty Alleviation</p>	<p>Briefing by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on the draft implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 11315 or the law establishing a Community-Based Monitoring System</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Dale "Along" Malapitan (1st District, Caloocan City), will continue its discussion on the draft IRR of RA 11315 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Legal Service Officer-in-Charge Henedine Palabras presented the draft IRR to the body. She said that the draft IRR is a product of several consultations with concerned government agencies and local government units (LGUs).</p> <p>According to PSA Deputy National Statistician Rosalinda Bautista, the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) aims to monitor poverty in its multidimensional sense. She said that the CBMS is an organized technology-based system of collecting information at the local level which serves as basis in targeting households in the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of government programs geared towards poverty alleviation and economic development.</p> <p>The information to be generated by the CBMS will include a compendium of localized facts, figures, and maps on the different dimensions of poverty such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, education, income, employment, security, and participation, Bautista said.</p> <p>She also apprised the body that the initial budget requirement of the CBMS for its first year of preparation is P150 million, which will be included in the PSA's 2021 budget proposal to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Bautista added that the target year of implementation of the CBMS is 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), one of the authors of RA 11315, asked the PSA to look into the possibility of implementing the said law by 2021. In response, Bautista explained that ample preparation time is necessary in order for data gathering to produce accurate information and good quality census.</p> <p>Reacting to the huge budgetary requirement of the CBMS, Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon), another author of the law, suggested that the PSA should consider streamlining the CBMS processes and adjusting the budget accordingly.</p> <p>Bautista mentioned that the law necessitates the creation of additional plantilla in the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI) which will be tasked with capacity building of LGUs on CBMS, and additional positions in the PSA which will be specifically designated to handle all CBMS activities.</p> <p>The PSA accepted the recommendations of the authors to include among the functions of the PSA the 1) processing of poverty data to be generated and submitted by the cities and municipalities, indicating the expected outputs from the poverty data; and 2) generating poverty</p>

Continuation... Poverty Alleviation		<p>statistics at higher levels which will complement and supplement local level data.</p> <p>The authors of RA 11315, among others, will be invited by the PSA to participate in the writeshop to finalize the said IRR on November 25 and 26.</p>
--	--	--

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
West Philippine Sea (Special Committee)	Briefing on the environmental damage to coral reefs in the South China Sea and international arbitration under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2nd District, Negros Oriental), agreed to craft and adopt a resolution to fund the conduct of a scientific research on the ecological status of the West Philippine Sea (WPS) vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China's (PRC) activities in the area. The research will likewise study and monitor the long-term effects of such activities on the internal waters of the country.</p> <p>Dr. Kent Carpenter gave a presentation entitled "Environmental Damage to Coral Reefs in the South China Sea and International Arbitration Under the UNCLOS."</p> <p>Carpenter is a marine biologist who conducts extensive research in marine biology conservation in the Philippines. He served as a consultant to and expert witness for the Philippine legal team in the country's case against the PRC regarding the WPS, which was heard by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands.</p> <p>He said that out of the 162 square kilometers (km²) minimal estimate of damage to offshore reefs in the WPS, the PRC is responsible for 159 km² of reef damage due to the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island building and reinforcement – affecting 16 reefs; • Materials dredging – 3 reefs; • Channel/Harbor Dredging – 13 reefs; and, • Collecting of giant clams from the sea floor for high-value commercial purposes – 41 reefs. <p>Likewise, Carpenter presented images of the ill-effects of continued ocean sedimentation, giant clam extractions and massive degradation of the fragile ecological systems and the "Tubbataha Reef-like" areas in the WPS, all of which were presented as compiled evidence during the hearings in The Hague. While the Philippine delegation was well represented throughout the proceedings, Carpenter said that the PRC neither participated in the hearings nor recognized the jurisdiction of the PCA.</p> <p>The Philippines vs. PRC case was an arbitration case brought by the Republic of the Philippines against the PRC to the PCA. It was decided in favor of the Philippines on July 12, 2016 but the PRC has maintained its stand not to recognize the arbitral court and hence its ruling.</p>

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Welfare of Children	Forum on capacity building for legislators and congressional staff on the rights of a child	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), conducted a forum on the rights of the child in partnership with the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Philippines, and the Child Rights Network (CRN), at the House of Representatives.

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Welfare of Children</p>		<p>The first part of the forum was conducted in the morning of November 19 with the congressional staff (staff of House Members) as participants and the second part was held in the afternoon of the same day for the legislators.</p> <p>The forum is part of this year's celebration of the National Children's Month with the theme, "Karapatang Pambata: Patuloy na Pahalagahan at Gampanan Tungo sa Magandang Kinabukasan." It was also meant to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Rep. Romualdez, in her welcome speech during the forum with House Members in attendance, acknowledged the duty of legislators to craft policies that protect the rights and welfare of children and create equal opportunities for children to reach their full potential.</p> <p>UNICEF Philippines Social Policy Chief Anjanette Saguisag, who was the resource speaker in both forums, presented the features of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). UNCRC is a legally binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.</p> <p>Saguisag also highlighted the four core principles which serve as the guiding standards of the UNCRC, as follows: non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participate. Likewise, she underscored the obligation of the state to raise public awareness on the protection of children.</p> <p>CWC Executive Director Mary Mitzi Cajayon-Uy presented the council's policy recommendations or legislative proposals promoting the rights of the child, as follows: increase the age of victims covered by the law on statutory rape from 12 to 16 years old; stop the use of corporal punishment; stop all forms of discrimination against children; and ensure the protection of child refugees.</p> <p>Under the Revised Penal Code, statutory rape is committed even without the presence of elements of force, threat, intimidation or fraudulent machinations, as long as the victim is under the age of 12.</p> <p>During the forum with participants composed of congressional staff, one of the main speakers was UN Senior Human Rights Advisor Mika Kanervavouri. He spoke about the history of international law and child's rights from the 19th century to the present. He also discussed the international bodies or regimes that promote and uphold various rights including children's rights, human rights, rights of refugees, and labor rights. International treaties have their own monitoring mechanisms but cannot do so much with regard to enforcement. However, member countries which are signatories to these treaties are expected to honor their commitments under the treaties.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentation of the resource speakers.</p>
---	--	---