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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 1045	Rep. Singson-Meehan	Granting full insurance coverage to all qualified agrarian reform beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), amending for the purpose Section 14 of RA 9700, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms	The Committee, chaired by Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, approved HB 1045. The bill seeks to provide immediate financial assistance to affected agrarian reform beneficiaries in the event of natural calamities.
	HB 5083	Rep. Canama	Providing for the restructuring and condonation of unpaid interests, penalties, and surcharges on loans secured by farmers, fisherfolk, and agrarian reform beneficiaries from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Agriculture (DA), People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), National Food Authority (NFA), and Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR)	The Committee approved HB 5083. Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), author of HB 5083, said that a similar bill was passed on Third Reading during the 17 th Congress. He also opined that the passage of the proposed law would significantly ease the burden of farmers and agrarian reform beneficiaries in the payment of their loans.
	HB 4735	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Transferring the Provincial Agrarian Reform Office (PARO) of Lanao del Norte from Iligan City to the Municipality of Tubod, Lanao del Norte and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 4735.
	HB 3029	Rep. Palma	Penalizing the conversion or those who cause the conversion of irrigated and irrigable lands, amending for the purpose RA 6657, as amended, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1998	The Committee deferred the approval of HB 3029. Noting that both bills have the same intent and have similar provisions, Rep. Chungalao suggested the withdrawal of HB 4360 by the author, Deputy Speaker Vilma Santos-Recto (6 th District, Batangas), and instead become a co-author of HB 3029.
	HB 4360	Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto	Prohibiting the conversion of irrigated and irrigable agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses, amending for the purpose Section 20 of RA 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991	The Committee will wait for the decision of Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto before acting on the two bills.
Basic Education and Culture	Substitute Bill to HBs 917, 1586, 3992 & 4392	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Romualdez (Y.M.), Agabas, and Robes	Institutionalizing the alternative learning system (ALS) in the basic education for out-of-school children, youth and adults and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style and amendment.
Foreign Affairs	HB 840	Rep. Biazon	Amending RA 7157, otherwise known as the Philippine Foreign Service Act of 1991 (by specifying that two-thirds of diplomatic and permanent missions shall be headed by career ambassadors	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), will deliberate further on the bills in its next meeting. Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2 nd District, Negros Oriental) sat as the presiding officer to give way to the Chairperson to sponsor her bill.
	HB 4148	Rep. Hofer	Reorganizing the foreign service corps of the Philippines	

Continuation... Foreign Affairs	HB 4169	Rep. Haresco	Amending RA 7157, to increase educational allowance for foreign service personnel, appropriating funds therefor	<p>Rep. Hofer, author of HB 4148, said that her bill seeks to reorganize the foreign service corps of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in response to the increasing number of Filipinos abroad. The bill allows the hiring of more foreign service personnel to render effective assistance and services to all Filipinos residing or working abroad. It also seeks to strengthen the DFA to make the career service more responsive to domestic and international developments.</p> <p>Rep. Hofer informed the body that DFA Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. will be giving his comments on the bills during the Committee's next meeting on December 11. Meanwhile, it was DFA Undersecretary Enrique Manalo who gave the following recommendations to be included in the bills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the organizational efficiency of the Department; • Ensure competitive recruitment; • Provide periodic updating of allowances and benefits of foreign affairs employees; • Streamline and strengthen the DFA's attached agencies; and • Include a provision addressing the future requirements of the Department.
	HB 5316	Rep. Eriguel	Granting lifetime validity of Philippine passports to senior citizens, further amending for the purpose Section 10 of RA 8239, otherwise known as the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, as amended	<p>The Committee agreed to refer HB 5316 to the Subcommittee on Consular Affairs and Assistance to Nationals.</p> <p>Rep. Sandra Eriguel (2nd District, La Union), author of HB 5316, said that her bill seeks to uphold the tradition of respect and gratitude to the elderly by exempting the latter from the rigorous process of renewing a passport through the grant of lifetime validity. This would spare the senior citizens from the inconvenience of waiting in line and commuting to DFA satellite offices.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 289	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing a polytechnic state college in the Municipality of Cuyapo, Province of Nueva Ecija to be known as the Cuyapo Polytechnic State College and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 289.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2652	Rep. Bernos	Converting the Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology (ASIST) in the Municipality of Lagangilang, including its ASIST-Bangued campus in the Municipality of Bangued, all in the Province of Abra into a state university to be known as the University of Abra and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 2652.
	Substitute Bill to HB 3194	Rep. Plaza	Converting the Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology (ASSCAT) in the Municipality of Bunawan, Province of Agusan del Sur into a state university, integrating therewith the satellite campus in the	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 3194.

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education			Municipality of Trento and all other campuses to be established in the future, to be known as the Agusan del Sur State University (ADSSU) and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 2330	Deputy Speaker Escudero	Establishing the Forensic Science Institute in the University of the Philippines (UP) System, defining its functions and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2330 subject to style and amendment. University of the Philippines (UP) Vice President for Legal Affairs Hector Uy expressed support for the bill. He asked that UP be given time to submit its position paper including its suggestions on the bill's appropriations provision.
	HB 4293	Rep. Yu	Fast-tracking countryside development by strengthening research and development through the establishment of a research and development office in JH Cerilles State College in the campuses of Mati, San Miguel, and Dumingag, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 4293 subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 5050 & 5134	Reps. Olivarez and Hataman	Establishing Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training and assessment centers in Parañaque City and in Isabela City, Province of Basilan, respectively, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HBs 5050 and 5134 subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 757, 1584 & 2694	Reps. Biazon, Romualdez (Y.M.), and Gasataya	Establishing UP campuses in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to further discuss the three bills. Uy expressed his support for the establishment of UP campuses in certain parts of the country. However, he said that there are requirements that need to be met prior to the establishment of additional UP campuses. He was instructed to submit the list of requirements to the Committee.
	HB 326	Rep. Elago	Promoting comprehensive free public tertiary education by providing for free university services and quality and affordable food services in state universities and colleges, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to further discuss the 15 bills. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) gave its support for the various scholarship bills.
	HB 1082	Rep. Sy-Alvarado	Providing free education for the children of uniformed personnel killed in the line of duty	Atty. Faye Sabate of CHED informed the Committee that although the Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Act (UniFAST) only caters to scholarships for undergraduates, the UniFAST Board is willing to create other modalities if given appropriate funding. UniFAST reconciles, improves, strengthens, expands, and puts under one body all government-funded modalities of Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) for tertiary education – and special purpose education assistance – in both public and private institutions. These modalities include scholarships, grants-in-aid, student loans and
	HB 1262	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Providing scholarship grants to students enrolling in teacher education and providing incentives for teaching in public schools	
	HB 1522	Rep. Garbin	Instituting a public administration and governance scholarship program	
	HBs 1642 & 5387	Reps. Vargas and Noel	Creating an advanced studies development program for exceptional employees from the government and the private sector	

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	HB 2054	Rep. Castelo	Granting scholarships to children of people with disabilities (PWDs) and appropriating funds therefor	other specialized forms of student assistance.
	HB 2609	Rep. Bolilia	Granting postgraduate scholarship to public elementary and high school teachers in state colleges and universities	Rep. Go lauded the intentions of HB 326 but expressed his concern over the funding that it will require. Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN), author of HB 326, said that she is amenable to some changes in her bill as long as they are in line with the universal standards for quality education.
	HB 3082	Rep. Saulog	Granting scholarship to all public school teachers and appropriating funds therefor	Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo (2 nd District, Quezon City), author of HBs 2054, 3485, 3702 and 3704, likewise expressed her willingness to accept amendments to these bills.
	HB 3176	Rep. Tolentino	Establishing a national scholarship program for studies in nuclear science and nuclear engineering	CHED was asked to submit a report on the current state of healthcare in state universities and colleges (SUCs) as well as an inventory of dormitories in SUCs.
	HB 3485	Rep. Castelo	Providing for free college education for underprivileged high school students whose general weighted average (GWA) is not lower than 85 percent	
	HB 3702	Rep. Castelo	Granting cash reward to recipients of academic excellence awards or Latin honors in college	
	HB 3704	Rep. Castelo	Providing scholarship grants to honor graduates to pursue graduate studies and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 4632	Rep. Cari	Fallen Heroes Scholarship for the Youth Act or the Caring Act of 2019	
	HB 5165	Rep. Castro	Granting free post-graduate education to public and private school teachers in state colleges and universities and local universities and colleges and providing funds therefor	
	HB 3203	Rep. Olivarez	Establishing a Bureau of Private Schools to administer, supervise, and regulate private universities, colleges, schools, and other private institutions offering tertiary education in the country, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred the deliberation of HB 3203 to give the CHED more time to study the bill and possible legal implications.
Rural Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 461, 1418 & 4198	Reps. Kho (E.), Enverga, and Yap (V.)	Institutionalizing the convergence strategy for sustainable rural development and providing the implementing mechanisms therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2 nd District, Masbate), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 461, 1418 and 4198. The Secretariat was directed to draft the corresponding Committee Report. The proposed National Convergence Initiative Act seeks "to develop and operationalize a common framework for equitable, inclusive, and sustainable rural development through the convergence of the resources of the principal rural development departments to maximize its impact."
Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HBs 4, 30, 164, 195, 338, 398, 563, 885, 1151, 2001, 2133, 2192,	Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Salceda, Belmonte, Suansing (E.), Romualdo, Deputy Speaker	Creating the Department of Disaster Resilience, defining its mandate, powers, and functions, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 nd District, Albay), approved the tax provisions of the Substitute Bill to the 34 bills with amendments. As stated in the bill, the proposed Department of Disaster Resilience shall be

Continuation... Ways and Means	2451, 3023, 3084, 3142, 3182, 3214, 3245, 3348, 3459, 3490, 3542, 3913, 3999, 4301, 4313, 4401, 4577, 4709, 4710, 4800, 4844 & 5335	Villafuerte, Reps. Abellanos, CaboChan, Romualdez (Y.M.), Vargas, Castelo, Fortun, Palma, Olivarez, Almario, Tolentino, Herrera-Dy, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Deloso- Montalla, Velasco, Nieto, Sy-Alvarado, Deputy Speaker Legarda, Reps. Agabas, Suarez (D.), Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Bolilia, Aragones, Tambunting, Dy (F.), Lim, and Yap (E.)		the "primary government agency responsible for leading, organizing, and managing the national effort to reduce disaster risk, prepare for and respond to disasters, recover and rehabilitate, and build forward better after the occurrence of disasters."
	Substitute Bill to HBs 193, 232, 1320, 1358, 1829, 2172, 2272, 2481, 2514, 2586, 2725, 2879, 2887, 2895, 2981, 2997, 3172, 3347, 3350, 3380, 3512, 3656, 3987, 4026, 4097, 4098, 4114, 4251, 4329, 4447, 4654, 4807, 4830, 4897, 4944, 5049 & 5141	Reps. Suansing (E.), Vargas, Vergara, Herrera-Dy, Rodriguez, Salo, Tan (A.), Defensor (L.), Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Nograles (J.J.), Aumentado, Nieto, Ramirez-Sato, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Salceda, Tolentino, Deloso-Montalla, Arroyo, Sacdalan, Aragones, Deputy Speaker Savellano, Reps. Tupas, Biazon, Haresco, Villarica, Tambunting, Olivarez, Deputy Speakers Hernandez and Villafuerte, Reps. Velasco, Lim, Siao, and Suarez (D.)	Establishing the national framework for water resource management and creating the Department of Water Resources and the Water Regulatory Commission, defining their mandates, powers, and functions, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to the 37 bills. The proposed law aims to ensure and accelerate "universal access to water supply and sanitation services, in a regulatory regime that encourages responsible private sector participation, fostering and prioritizing infrastructure and public works that adopt innovative solutions and international best practices to address the challenges of climate change."
	Substitute Bill to HB 289	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing a polytechnic state college in the Municipality of Cuyapo, Province of Nueva Ecija to be known as the Cuyapo Polytechnic State College and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HB 289.

Continuation... Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HB 2652	Rep. Bernos	Converting the Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology (ASIST) in the Municipality of Lagangilang, including its ASIST-Bangued campus in the Municipality of Bangued, all in the Province of Abra into a state university to be known as the University of Abra and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HB 2652 with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 3194	Rep. Plaza	Converting the Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology (ASSCAT) in the Municipality of Bunawan, Province of Agusan del Sur into a state university, integrating therewith the satellite campus in the Municipality of Trento and all other campuses to be established in the future, to be known as the Agusan del Sur State University (ADSSU) and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HB 3194.
	Substitute Bill to HB 3740	Rep. Rodriguez	Expanding enterprise-based education and training, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HB 3740 with amendment.
	HB 4796 in consolidation with HB 3424	Reps. Eriguel and Vargas	Establishing a comprehensive system for registration and licensing of social welfare and development agencies and accreditation of social welfare and development programs and services, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the bill with amendment.
Welfare of Children	HBs 137, 3020, 3632 & 4867	Reps. Roman, Palma, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), and Rep. Rodriguez	Imposing stiffer penalties for child abuse, exploitation and discrimination, amending for the purpose RA 7610, otherwise known as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), approved HB 137 in consolidation with HBs 3020, 3520, 3632 and 4867. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.
	HB 3520	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending RA 9231, otherwise known as "Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act," to foster all efforts to the welfare of children, to promote the best interest of children that are paramount consideration in all actions concerning them	
	HBs 179, 217, 475, 520, 689, 1945, 2173, 2253, 2832, 2848, 3027, 3398, 3705, 4006, 4010 & 5287	Rep. Suansing (H.), Deputy Speaker Puno, Reps. Brosas, Aglipay, Quimbo, Fortun, Herrera- Dy, Cabochan, Rodriguez, Yu, Palma, Revilla, Castelo, Agabas, Villarica, and Dalipe	Instituting the Magna Carta of Day Care Workers and providing funds therefor	The Committee agreed to consolidate the bills. The Secretariat was directed to draft the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report for the Committee's consideration and approval in its next meeting.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 639 & 2281	Deputy Speaker Legarda and Rep. Acosta-Alba	Recognizing the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples (ICCs/IPs) community conserved territories and areas (ICCA), establishing for the purpose the National ICCA registry, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), continued its deliberation on the draft Substitute Bill to HBs 639 and 2281.</p> <p>Quirino Rep. Junie Cua suggested to the TWG to just focus on reviewing the provisions of the substitute bill that may be deemed inconsistent with existing laws. He spoke of the need to choose the right language to avoid misinterpretation of the law upon its implementation.</p> <p>It can be recalled that the substitute bill was already reported out earlier by the TWG to the mother Committee for consideration. But the bill was referred back to the TWG to thresh out issues that cropped up during the Committee's deliberation on the bill.</p> <p>The Members and the resource persons were requested to submit their respective recommendations to be incorporated in the draft substitute bill.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Foreign Affairs	<p>Consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on the following issues and concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philippine relations with the United States of America (USA) Philippine relations with the Russian Federation 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), discussed with DFA officials issues and concerns pertaining to international relations and the condition of overseas Filipino workers in some countries.</p> <p>DFA Undersecretary for Policy Enrique Manalo said the Philippines' relationship with the USA remains strong anchored on shared history of values and friendship. In terms of cooperation in defense and security, he said the USA is still the only military ally of the Philippines. Manalo said the USA-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1951 is still the framework binding the two countries. Other agreements which bolster the country's alliance with the US include the Visiting Forces Agreements (VFA), Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), and Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.</p> <p>In terms of trading and exports, the USA is continuously the country's biggest trading partner. With regard to people's ties, there are four million Filipinos living in the USA as immigrants or workers, while there are 350,000 American citizens living in the Philippines.</p> <p>The DFA Undersecretary said that the Philippine-Russian relationship for the past 43 years received lesser attention than during the term of President Rodrigo Duterte. For the last three years, the relations between the Philippines and Russia have become stronger. Manalo said the recent visits of President Duterte to Russia resulted in various bilateral cooperation and agreements in different fields such as agriculture, defense and security, education, energy, mass communication, trade and tourism.</p>

- Situation of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the European Region

According to Manalo, there are about 9,000 documented Filipinos working and living in Russia, majority of whom are women working in the household service sector as nannies, cleaners, and housemaids.

On the query of Rep. Micaela Violago (2nd District, Nueva Ecija), DFA said it is exploring possibilities of increasing job opportunities for professionals and skilled workers in Russia.

Manalo said there are about 600,000 OFWs in Europe, who are generally enjoying a good standard of living and working conditions. The OFWs are mostly in the United Kingdom (UK), where there are 193,000 documented Filipinos working in various sectors such as information technology, hospitality, and healthcare; and in Italy, where there are 160,621 OFWs working as household staff, agricultural laborers, bartenders, sales persons, and healthcare personnel. Other OFWs or overseas Filipinos are working or living in the following countries: Spain, 45,500; France, 34,000 (including 9,000 undocumented migrants); and Norway, 22,500.

Manalo mentioned the labor requirements of other countries in Europe. He said that the Czech Republic intends to increase its quota for working visa to serve its annual requirement of 1,000 jobs for skilled and semi-skilled workers such as industrial truck operators, mechanical machinery assemblers, and electronic and communication technology installers. In Slovenia, the demand for work in engineering, tourism, and healthcare sectors is growing. In Poland, the labor demand consists mostly of factory or warehouse workers, drivers, and foreign households workers.

- Situation of OFWs in Greece

DFA Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Maria Amelita Aquino informed the Committee that as of December 2018, there about 10,500 Filipinos residing and working in Greece, including 1,500 undocumented workers, aside from about 50,000 Filipino seafarers also working in Greece.

Aquino reported on the progress of the country's negotiations for a social security agreement with Greece for the benefit of OFWs. Aquino said the negotiations were supposed to have reached the final stage prior to the signing of the agreement, however, Greece sought to postpone the process until it is able to complete the reforms instituted on its own social security system.

The Committee sought clarification on the recall order issued to Welfare Officer Nerrisa Mercado in June 2019 due to her alleged disrespectful attitude towards OFWs. Aquino said the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) assured the DFA that the matter will be acted upon and that there will be no disruption in the services being extended by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to the OFWs.

On another matter, Rep Hofer reported the highlights of the Committee's official visit to Moscow, Russia from November 11 to 16, 2019. According to Rep. Hofer, the Philippine delegation held a meeting with the Committee on International Affairs Chairperson Leonid Slutsky of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and with Deputy Chairperson Olga Epifanova of the State Duma. They discussed the role of parliaments in the development of the countries in the Pacific Rim and the strengthening of the Russian-Philippine partnership and inter-parliamentary cooperation in tourism, education, labor, migration, and fight against international

Continuation... Foreign Affairs		terrorism. Slutsky also promised to look into the problems of Filipinos living in Russia.
Rural Development	Briefing by the Philippine Carabao Center of the Department of Agriculture (PCC-DA) on empowering rural communities through carabao and buffalo-based enterprises	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate), listened to the briefing by the PCC on its accomplishments and plans and programs, particularly those that will help improve the lives of people in rural communities.</p> <p>PCC Executive Director Amel del Barrio said that the PCC's 2019 budget allocation amounts to P665 million. Of this amount, P574 million or 86.3% has already been obligated to various programs as of October 31. The PCC intends to fully obligate its 2019 budget by the end of the fiscal year.</p> <p>Del Barrio presented PCC's carabao development model with the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of genetically-improved carabaos that produce commercial volume of high quality milk, meat and draft (carabaos trained to perform tasks) adapted to local conditions; • Increase in the number of entrepreneur-farmers and carabao-based enterprises; • Creation of communities of industry partners who see opportunities and benefits in supporting the Carabao Development Program (CDP); and • Expansion of market to absorb production of carabao-based enterprises. <p>Del Barrio likewise apprised the body of the continuing plans and programs of the agency under its Genetic Improvement Program (GIP) which is a system for selection, propagation and evaluation of breeds of buffaloes using DNA markers and reproductive biotechnologies; Research 4 Development (R4D) which involves development and refinement of technologies for the industry; and Buffalo Enterprise Development (BED) which involves the value-chain approach covering production, processing, marketing and support services for CBEs.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Local Government	Discussion with concerned government agencies and stakeholders on the status of the African swine fever (ASF) outbreak in the country	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Wilfredo Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and Rep. Noel Villanueva (3rd District, Tarlac), Chair of the Committee on Local Government, will conduct another meeting with concerned government agencies and stakeholders to continue the discussion on the ASF outbreak in some parts of the country.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture's (DA) Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Director Ronnie Domingo reported that the National ASF Task Force (NATF) was organized to regulate the movement of pork products in the country and prevent the spread of ASF to regions not yet affected by the disease. The NATF is chaired by President Rodrigo Duterte with the DA Secretary as the vice chair.</p> <p>Domingo informed the Committee that as of November 18, ASF outbreaks were reported in Regions I, III, IV-A and the National Capital Region (NCR). To date, there are about 20,000 culled ASF-infected pigs, but Domingo said that this number is way smaller than Vietnam's 616,000. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) allocated P82.5 million to the Bureau in</p>

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Local Government</p>		<p>September this year for the implementation of ASF biosecurity and quarantine measures.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary Ariel Cayanan said that the DA created a geographic zoning plan that divides areas in the country according to the extent of ASF infection to aid the government in monitoring ASF cases and in implementing measures that will effectively eradicate the disease. The plan divides the areas into: free zones, containment zones, protected zones, surveillance zones, and infected zones.</p> <p>Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (ProPork) Executive Assistant Analiza Uy complained about the difficulty in transporting live hogs and selling pork products due to the ban on these products imposed by some provinces. She appealed to concerned local government units (LGUs) to lift the ban on hogs, pork and processed products in their respective jurisdictions.</p> <p>Meanwhile, <i>Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura</i> (SINAG) Chair Rosendo So said that RA 10611 or the Food Safety Act of 2013 should be properly implemented to prevent the entry of ASF-infected pork and pork products into the country. He said that the Bureau of Customs (BOC) should not allow the entry of pork products without undergoing quarantine at the port of entry.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO), recognizing the importance of quarantine to prevent the spread of diseases, asked the BOC to review its policy regarding the entry of imported meat products into the country.</p> <p>Not convinced that ASF cases are decreasing, Reps. Rico Geron (Party-List, AGAP) and Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac) expressed dismay at DA's lack of tangible actions in combating the spread of ASF and in addressing the plight of the hog raisers. Stakeholders present in the meeting agreed to this observation.</p> <p>The Committee will invite the heads of the DA, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and BOC, as well as the regional veterinarians of ASF-affected areas in its next meeting to share their plans and strategies against the spread of ASF.</p>
<p>Science and Technology</p>	<p>Discussion on the need to establish a comprehensive legal framework for the regulation of nuclear energy and the creation of the Philippine Nuclear Research Commission (PNRC)</p>	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Francis Gerald Aguinaldo Abaya (1st District, Cavite), discussed with concerned agencies the need to establish a comprehensive legal framework for the regulation of nuclear energy and the creation of the PNRC, as proposed in HB 652.</p> <p>Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary Gerardo Erguiza Jr. apprised the Committee of the four cornerstones of the nuclear power program which are policy, legal framework, alignment with international standards, and public acceptability. According to Erguiza, a tracking survey is being conducted by the Department in order to come up with a comprehensive and strategic plan on nuclear energy that will be acceptable to all. (Tracking survey uses aggregate polling data to develop and validate a new measure of public support for nuclear energy.)</p> <p>Foreign experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Abdelmadjid Cherf, Anthony Wetherall, and Nathalie Horbach underscored the importance of establishing a legal framework for the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear energy, and adhering to international legal instruments on nuclear energy.</p>

Continuation... Science and Technology		<p>Rep. Abaya, also the author of HB 652, said that his bill places the PNRC under the jurisdiction of the Office of the President (OP) to ensure its independence. As stated in his bill, the PNRC shall “exercise regulatory control over the peaceful uses of ionizing radiation in areas under the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines, including the production, possession, use, import, transport, transfer, handling, and management of radioactive materials, or other activities or practices identified by the PNRC.”</p> <p>Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Assistant Secretary Teodoro Gatchalian said that a similar bill was filed in the Senate by Senate President Vicente Sotto III. He also suggested that the regulatory and licensing function of the existing Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) be transferred to the proposed Commission to ensure a comprehensive approach to nuclear energy regulation.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective recommendations on the proposed creation of the PNRC.</p>
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OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Welfare of Children	Creation of a technical working group (TWG) to draft a bill on the Magna Carta of Children	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), created a technical working group (TWG) to draft a bill on the Magna Carta of Children.</p> <p>Reps. Romualdez and Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan) were designated co-chairpersons of the TWG. The five vice chairpersons of the Committee will sit as members, along with representatives from concerned government agencies and the private sector.</p>