



Committee Daily Bulletin

18th Congress
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 74
February 24, 2020

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 6143	Rep. Cua	Providing for the protection of financial consumers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Junie Cua (1st District, Quirino), will deliberate further on the draft Substitute Bill to HB 6143 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee agreed on the following points, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the definition of “responsible pricing” in Section 3 of the bill; • Rephrase Section 8 C to read as: “In addition to the requirements of RA 3765 or the Truth in Lending Act, financial service providers are required to take into consideration the principle of responsible pricing in their pricing policies and procedures;” • Amend Section 8 D to clarify that the selection and treatment of clients shall not involve discrimination on the basis of age, financial capacity, and health condition, aside from other factors already included in this section; and • Adopt Section 8 F (Financial Consumer Protection Assistance Mechanism), Section 9 (Bundling of Products), and Section 10 (Training) of the draft substitute bill. <p>The Committee deferred its deliberation on Section 11 (No Waiver of Rights) pending the submission of the position paper by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).</p>
Economic Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 6163 & 6291	Reps. Garin (S.) and Rodriguez	Providing for the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)-sponsors reinvestment plan, amending for the purpose Sections 3, 8 and 9 of RA 9856, otherwise known as the REIT Act of 2009	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 6163 and 6291.
Energy	HR 180	Rep. Dagooc	Recognizing the important role of the National Electrification Administration (NEA) and honoring the gains of the Rural Electrification Program through its partnership with electric cooperatives in providing electricity to rural areas	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, adopted HR 180.</p> <p>Rep. Godofredo Guya (Party-List, RECOBODA), co-author of HR 180, said that the resolution recognizes the important role of NEA in the country and honors its accomplishments towards providing sustainable electrification in the rural areas.</p> <p>NEA Administrator Edgardo Masongsong apprised the Committee that as of 2019, all the 78 provinces in the country have been energized. He said that 99% of the barangays have already been reached under the NEA’s rural electrification program and 84% of the sitios are already connected to the grid line, benefiting more than 61 million Filipinos.</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>Masongsong, however, said that at the level of the sitios, NEA's total electrification objective is being hampered by various challenges, such as: the difficulty in accessing far-flung areas; peace and order problems; resistance from landowners who are unwilling to give up their land for the project's right of way; and inadequate government subsidy for the program.</p> <p>Rep. Velasco asked NEA to continuously look for other ways to bring electricity to the remaining sitios that have not yet been covered by the electrification program. He stated that access to reliable, sufficient, sustainable, and affordable energy is crucial in improving the lives of the Filipino people.</p>
	HB 468	Rep. De Jesus	Strengthening the NEA by converting it into the National Electrification Authority, defining and enhancing its powers, functions, and operations to achieve the government's policy for total rural electrification, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee suspended its deliberation on HB 468 pending the submission by the Department of Energy (DOE) and other concerned government agencies of their comments and recommendations on the bill.</p> <p>Rep. Presley de Jesus (Party-List, PHILRECA), author of HB 468, said that his bill seeks to convert NEA into an authority to enable it to expedite the total electrification of all sitios in the country and address the overlapping functions between the DOE and the NEA in implementing the government's Rural Electrification Program and in the supervision of electric cooperatives (ECs).</p> <p>Expressing support for the bill were the representatives from NEA, Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (PHILRECA), Association of Mindanao Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AMRECO), Rural Electric Consumers and Beneficiaries of Development and Advancement (RECOBODA) Inc., National Center for Electric Cooperative Consumers, Inc. (NCECCO), and Philippine Association of Board of Directors of Rural Electric Cooperatives.</p>
	HR 81	Rep. Suarez (D.)	Review and assessment of the performance of electric cooperatives in the Philippines in the context of their role in the attainment of total rural electrification and economic development in the country	<p>The Committee suspended its deliberation on HR 81 pending NEA's submission of its performance assessment of ECs including the assessment of the factors that cause brownouts and voltage fluctuations in the rural areas.</p> <p>Rep. David "Jay-Jay" Suarez (2nd District, Quezon), author of HR 81, underscored the importance of conducting a review and performance assessment of ECs particularly on their role in the country's total electrification program. He spoke of the need to institute the necessary strategic interventions to address problems faced by the ECs such as inefficient management, poor service, heavy debts, corruption, unnecessary political interference, and high universal charges.</p> <p>Masongsong said that NEA conducts performance assessment of ECs based on a set of standards and parameters. He added that NEA measures the financial, institutional, and technical performance of ECs and at the same time determines their credit</p>

Continuation... Energy				worthiness and the level of development, protection, empowerment, and satisfaction of member-consumers.
Labor and Employment	HB 5338	Rep. Tolentino	Requiring industries engaged in the exploitation of natural resources to give preferential employment to local residents, amending for the purpose the Labor Code of the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), approved HB 5338, subject to style and amendment.
Legislative Franchises	HB 906	Deputy Speaker Pimentel	Amending the franchise of the Tandag Electric and Telephone Company, Inc. granted under RA 8715, and renewing/extending the term thereof to another 25 years	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 st District, Palawan), approved HB 906 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 1737	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Renewing the franchise granted to Caceres Broadcasting Corporation under RA 8106, or the law granting Caceres Broadcasting Corporation a franchise to construct, install, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Island of Luzon for another 25 years	The Committee approved HB 1737 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 5797	Rep. Tejada	Extending for another 25 years the franchise granted to International Communications Corporation presently known as Bayan Telecommunications Inc., further amending certain sections of RA 3259 or the law granting franchise to the International Communications Corporation, as amended by RA 7633	The Committee approved HB 5797 and the corresponding Committee Report.
			Chairman's announcement on the Committee's action to receive position papers from all the Committee Members and stakeholders in relation to the 11 measures on the franchise renewal of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation	<p>The Committee instructed the Secretariat to accept position papers from the Committee Members and other stakeholders on the renewal of franchise of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation.</p> <p>ABS-CBN is one of the Philippines' leading media and entertainment organizations. Its franchise is set to expire on May 4, 2020.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), Rep. Alvarez said that the Committee will schedule the first hearing on ABS-CBN's franchise renewal in May or after the opening of the 2nd Regular Session of the 18th Congress on May 4. Rep. Alvarez said that setting the date in May will allow the Committee Members enough time to review the position papers of the different stakeholders, thus, hastening the deliberation process for the renewal of the franchise of the broadcasting company.</p> <p>Several Members asked if ABS-CBN would still be able to continue its operation even if its franchise was not renewed. National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) representative Anna Liza Buenviaje said that the network may be allowed to continue to operate while its application for franchise renewal is pending in Congress. Buenviaje made this statement based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by Congress, NTC, and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) in 1994.</p>

Continuation... Legislative Franchises				Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2 nd District, Surigao del Sur) said that the validity of the MOU is subject to the legal opinion of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The NTC was requested to submit a copy of the MOU to the Committee.
Mirco, Small and Medium Enterprise Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 5, 4878 & 5610	Speaker Cayetano	Institutionalizing microfinance programs and access to capital to support and grow micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), allocating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 5, 4878 and 5610. The Substitute 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.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 1068, 1070, 2121, 2771, 2842, 3991, 4512, 5055 & 6004	Rep. Limkaichong, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Salceda, Rodriguez, Agabas, Nograles (J.J.), Noel, and Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Further promoting entrepreneurship by strengthening, empowering and enhancing the financing programs for MSMEs, amending for the purpose RA 6977, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for MSMEs, as amended	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the nine bills, subject to style. The Substitute Bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.
Ways and Means	HB 4742	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending RA 7103, otherwise known as the Iron and Steel Industry Act, providing for stiffer penalties and sanctions	The Committee, presided by its Senior Vice Chair, Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1 st District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on the bill in its next meeting. Philippine Iron and Steel Institute (PISI) President Roberto Cola suggested deleting paragraph (a), Section 10 (Penalties for Smuggling) of HB 4742 which provides that a fine of not less than P300,000 and imprisonment of not less than six years shall be imposed to any person who smuggles iron and steel products with an appraised landed value of not more than P150,000. Cola explained that a container van with about 20 tons of cargo is valued at about P450,000 to P500,000. He said that there are practically no shipments lower than P450,000 thus the provision is “unrealistic.” The Committee is likewise inclined to adopt Cola's recommendation to impose a fine equivalent to the value of the goods or articles unlawfully imported.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 2695, 2660, 3230, 553, 1783, 3762, 1788, 2537, 3642, 3712,	Reps. Ungab, Albano (A.), Umali (A.), Biazon, Espino, Rodriguez, Gullas,	Instituting the Citizen Service Training Course, establishing the Citizen Service Corps, creating the Citizen Service Mobilization Commission, and appropriating funds therefor	The joint technical working group (TWG), co-presided by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, and Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, Chair of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, will deliberate further on the Substitute Bill to the 32 bills in its next meeting.

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)	4145, 4155, 4262, 4543, 5449, 606, 1118, 1192, 1241, 1309, 2087, 2447, 2559, 2613, 2685, 3181, 3337, 3376, 3497, 3835, 4345 & 5242	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Cagas, Aumentado, Barba, Haresco, Deputy Speakers Savellano and Santos-Recto, Reps. Abaya, Acop, Tupas, Velasco, Torres- Gomez, Gatchalian, Deputy Speakers Abu and Villafuerte, Reps. Violago, Nogralles (J.J.), Chipeco, Tolentino, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Salceda, Sy- Alvarado, Paduano, Tambunting, and Olivarez		<p>In today's meeting, the TWG focused its discussion on whether the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program should be included in the curriculum for senior high school (SHS) or only in college, or both.</p> <p>Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) President Domingo Cayosa said that he supports the mandatory establishment of ROTC program in college level only, explaining that 75% of the students in SHS are minors, aside from the fact that they are already preoccupied with various subjects and co-curricular activities.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of National Defense (DND), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the University of the Philippines (UP) Vanguard Inc. expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>The UP Vanguard, Inc. is an alumni organization of Advance Course ROTC graduates of UP.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 3762, said that the mandatory ROTC for students will boost the military reserve force whose members might be called to serve if war occurs and will augment manpower needed for the government's disaster response efforts.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) objected to the bill, suggesting that there should first be a study on the implementation of ROTC and the National Service Training Program (NSTP) to determine their effectiveness before thoroughly discussing the proposed law.</p> <p>Likewise, representatives from different universities and colleges object to the proposed law. According to them, students should have the liberty to choose whether or not to take the ROTC course, adding that it will be an additional burden physically, mentally, and financially to the students.</p> <p>The DND, TESDA, and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HR 556	Deputy Speaker Pichay	Inquiry into the unabated smuggling of goods into the country by unscrupulous operators of customs bonded warehouses (CBWs) to the detriment of local manufacturers and producers and the Philippine economy, with the end in view of recommending measures to stop smuggling using the warehousing system by revisiting the provisions of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) on bonded warehouses and limiting the type, nature, and number of bonded warehouses	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 556 in its next meeting.</p> <p>In compliance with the earlier request for data by the mother Committee, Bureau of Customs (BOC) Deputy Commissioner Edward James Dy Buco said that the Bureau has submitted the soft copy of summarized liquidation reports of CBWs.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing stressed that she was expecting to see physical documents submitted in support of the liquidation report by the Bureau of Customs-Assessment and Operation Coordinating Group (BOC-AOCG).</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)				<p>Dy Buco explained that the documents requested are voluminous and that the concerned ports were only required to submit summary reports.</p> <p>The BOC-AOCG was requested, among others, to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquidation report for five years of each of the three identified CBW operators – Joint Oil Companies Aviation Fuel Storage Plant (JOCASP), Mofels Food International Corporation, and Felmocor Food Processing Corporation – operating in the Ports of Manila, Batangas, and Subic, Manila International Container Port (MICP), and Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). The reports must include information on the volume and value of imported raw materials and products manufactured, amount of local sales and taxes paid, and copy of certificates of loading and bill of lading; • List of active miscellaneous manufacturing bonded warehouse (MMBW) divisions for 2019; • BOC's plans in addressing the recent spike of unmonitored finished products under alleged "constructive exportation" in 2019; • Formula of bonded warehouses in determining the rate of wastage in the manufacture of raw materials and copy of export documents; and • Copy of import documents, such as certificates of loading and landing, pertaining to the importation of fuels by airline companies from 2017 to 2019. <p>Constructive exportation/importation, per BOC Customs Administrative Order (CAO) 1-2009, refers to the sale or any other modes of conveyance and delivery of raw materials and finished or semi-finished products from a CBW to a manufacturing customs bonded warehouse, PEZA/Economic Zone, Freeport, or vice versa.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Subcommittee on Rice (Agriculture and Food)	Briefing by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and other concerned government agencies on their respective programs to cushion the impact of RA 11203, otherwise known as the Rice Tariffication Law, to the rice industry especially to the small farmers	<p>The Subcommittee on Rice, presided by Rep. Antonio "Tonyupet" Albano (1st District, Isabela), listened to the briefing conducted by DA on the programs it is implementing to cushion the impact of RA 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law, to the local rice industry especially to the small farmers.</p> <p>RA 11203 liberalizes the importation and exportation of rice in the country, replacing the system of quantitative restriction with a purely tariff system. The law also created the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to improve the rice farmers' competitiveness and income amidst the liberalization of rice trade. It provides an annual appropriation of P10 billion for the next six years following its enactment in 2019, which is distributed to the following program components: Mechanization, P5 billion; Seed, P3 billion; Credit, P1 billion; and Extension Services, P1 billion.</p>

<p>Continuation... Subcommittee on Rice (Agriculture and Food)</p>		<p>The Committee on Agriculture Chair, Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), inquired on the tariff revenues from rice importation collected by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) since the start of the implementation of the law. BOC Bureau of Accreditation Director Jesse Cardona said that the BOC has so far collected more than P3 billion from December 2019 to February 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Enverga enjoined the BOC to closely monitor the country's rice importation to ensure that proper tariffs and taxes are collected, which is a basic measure of success of RA 11203.</p> <p>DA Assistant Secretary for Agribusiness Andrew Villacorta assured the Committee that DA is working closely with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the BOC in monitoring rice importations.</p> <p>Reporting on the average production and price of rice or palay, DA Director for Operations Roy Abaya said that the volume of rice production in 2019 reached 18.82 million metric tons (mt) which is lower by 251,300 mt as compared to 2018's output of 19.07 million mt. He added that prices of palay went down from P19.83 per kilo in January 2019 to P15.64 per kilo in December of the same year.</p> <p>To alleviate the plight of rice farmers due to the falling prices of palay, Abaya said that the DA has implemented various credit programs for the farmers with the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) serving as conduit banks.</p> <p>In his report on the status of the RCEF, Abaya said that only P1.52 billion has been disbursed out of the P10 billion annual RCEF.</p> <p>Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato inquired why only P1.52 billion has been released from the RCEF considering that there are a lot of farmers in need of assistance. Abaya replied that one of the reasons is the lapse of the 2019 SARO (Special Allotment Release Order) for the Mechanization component of the program. On the other hand, he added that 87.58% of the fund for the Seed component has been obligated and the seeds distributed to farmers.</p> <p>Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Budget and Management Bureau E Director Cristina Clasara disclosed that the DBM is in the process of reissuing the SARO for the Mechanization component of the RCEF.</p> <p>Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao belied Abaya's report that seeds for planting have been distributed to farmers, stressing that no farmer in his district has ever received such farm input. Abaya explained that the DA is just waiting for the DBM to release the funds for seed distribution in the solon's district.</p> <p>On Rep. Chungalao's assertion that the DA should always coordinate its plans and programs with the district Representatives, Villacorta said that Agriculture Secretary William Dar has already instructed the regional directors to heed this request.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) inquired on the capability of the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) to spearhead the modernization of the country's rice industry, as mandated by RA 11203.</p>
--	--	--

Continuation... Subcommittee on Rice (Agriculture and Food)		<p>PHilMech Director, Dr. Baldwin Jallorina, said that PHilMech is capable of performing its mandate, adding that it already has a system in place for the distribution of farm equipment to eligible farmers, rice farm associations, and registered rice cooperatives throughout the country.</p> <p>On the role of the DSWD in the implementation of the RCEF, DSWD Undersecretary for Special Concerns Camilo Gudmalin said that the amount of P31.05 billion has been allocated for FY 2020 as cash subsidy for farmers who will be affected by the continuous decline in the prices of palay.</p> <p>The Committee will conduct another briefing with other concerned government agencies on their respective programs aimed at cushioning the impact of the law to the rice industry.</p>
Economic Affairs jt. w/ Trade and Industry	<p>Assessment report by the following government agencies on the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the economy and other sectors, and on what their plans are to cushion its negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) 	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, and Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, listened to the briefing of key government agencies on the effects of COVID-19 on the Philippine economy and specific sectors, and what they are doing or intend to do to mitigate the disease's negative impact.</p> <p>NEDA Director of National Policy and Planning Staff (NPSS) Reynaldo Cancio echoed the statement of NEDA Director General Ernesto Pernia that there is a high level of uncertainty surrounding the situation given that there are still many unknowns with respect to COVID-19. The NEDA assumptions on the impact of COVID-19 are therefore based on current scenarios and do not yet take into account potential gains from mitigating measures. Cancio added that according to Pernia, the economic assumptions may improve once the epidemic is under control.</p> <p>Cancio also said that efforts to contain COVID-19 and measures to mitigate its effects on certain sectors would add pressure to the country's fiscal position. He said that the estimated decline in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) would increase the national government's deficit to 3.3% to 3.5% in 2020.</p> <p>According to Cancio, the sector that will be hit hardest by the COVID-19 epidemic is the country's tourism sector. He said that NEDA estimates that the travel ban to and from China and its Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macau) and an expected 10% drop in foreign tourists from other countries may reduce the Philippines' GDP for 2020 by 0.3% to -0.7% if the disruption lasts until June. Moreover, he said, the slowdown in economic activities may reduce employment by 30,000 to 60,000.</p> <p>Cancio presented NEDA's proposed measures to minimize the impact of the new virus which include, among others, promotion of domestic tourism and identification of new sources or markets for the industries affected by value chain disruption.</p> <p>Rep. Garin and Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) requested NEDA to formulate concrete short-term and long-term solutions to make the country resilient in times of a global crisis such as the COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Rep. Gatchalian inquired about the effect of the disease outbreak to the "Build, Build, Build" program of the government. Cancio replied that there will be disruptions in the delivery of construction supplies, especially iron, steel, and cement,</p>

<p>Continuation... Economic Affairs jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) 	<p>considering that most of these raw materials and goods are imported from China.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) suggested the suspension of the collection of some fees in domestic tourism as well as the promotion of local production of commodities imported from China.</p> <p>Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte) and Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay) cited the importance of creating a taskforce or a committee that will assess the COVID-19 health crisis and to formulate and implement measures that will mitigate the effects on the country's economy.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo said that even with the COVID-19 outbreak, the government remains committed to the Philippines-China Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation (JTETC). Rodolfo said that China ranked second among the country's trading partners in terms of approved investments in 2019, committing P85.20 billion investments in ICT, real estate, and manufacturing sectors.</p> <p>BOI Director for Manufacturing Industries Service Evariste Cagatan presented the impact of the disease outbreak on the country's trade and industry especially for businesses with high value export and import dealings with China. He said the Philippines is more dependent on China in terms of trade and investments. Cagatan said that while electronics, iron and steel, and plastics industries are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak because of the delay in the delivery of raw and immediate materials, there is little or no effect on the following sectors: shipbuilding, chemicals, leather goods, processed food and nuts, and cassava starch.</p> <p>On ensuring the continued supply of face masks, Rodolfo reported that the Medtecs International Corporation Limited (MedTecs), the sole domestic manufacturer of face masks in the country, has committed to increase its weekly production of face masks to 400,000. The DTI continues to monitor the price of face masks based on the suggested retail price, he added.</p> <p>Rodolfo mentioned that the Board of Investments (BOI), the investment promotion arm of DTI, had a dialogue with pharmaceutical companies to ensure the continuity of supply of medicines and medical supplies in the country.</p> <p>DFA Undersecretary Lourdes Yparraguirre cited the assessment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the world economy is relatively minor and short-lived based on the prevailing situation. However, the IMF does not discount the fact that if the epidemic turns out to be persistent and widespread, the negative consequences will be prolonged and serious.</p> <p>Yparraguirre said that COVID-19 has minimal impact on remittances from overseas Filipinos because remittances from China account to only 2.66% of the total overseas remittances. She also reported that the second batch of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Wuhan, China (epicenter of COVID-19) are set to be repatriated and transported to New Clark City in Pampanga for a 14-day quarantine.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Barbers, Yparraguirre clarified that the temporary suspension of visas covers foreign nationals coming directly from or transiting through China and its Administrative Regions.</p>
---	---	---

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Economic Affairs jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) • Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) 	<p>DOLE Undersecretary Joji Aragon said that amidst the predicament on COVID-19, there is a projected minimal decrease of 2.2% in remittances from overseas. Remittances coming from other countries will compensate the slowdown in remittances from virus-affected China, Hong Kong and Macau, she added.</p> <p>The Joint Committee requested DOLE and DFA to submit a report on specific effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the welfare OFWs.</p> <p>Robert Dominic Echiverri, executive assistant in the Office of DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri, informed the body that the Department issued Memorandum Circular 2020-018 directing the local governments to create Barangay Health Response Teams (BHRT) to address concerns related to the COVID-19 outbreak at the local level.</p> <p>The BHRT is composed of an executive officer, a barangay tanod, and two barangay health workers, one of whom is preferably a nurse or midwife. It helps the Department of Health (DOH) in contact tracing and monitoring of arriving passengers from a coronavirus-infected country within its locality.</p>
--	---	--

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>Update on the status of the recommendation to suspend the implementation of the National Valuation Verification System (NVVS)</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will continue its deliberation on the NVVS in its next meeting.</p> <p>Bureau of Customs-Assessment and Operation Coordinating Group (BOC-AOCG) Director Yasser Abbas reported that Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero has already ordered the BOC's AOCG and the Import Assessment Service (IAS) to revert to the Bureau's electronic Value Reference Information System (eVRIS) as its value reference system instead of the NVVS. When asked if the NVVS has been suspended, Abbas said that it will still be used as an internal valuation tool.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing however noted that the BOC memorandum circular supposed to provide for the reversion to the eVRIS is a mere reminder of the data migration process and not an abrogation of the use of the NVVS.</p> <p>The NVVS is a web-based system which the BOC assessment officers may access to verify the declared value of importation against the prevailing reference values generated by the system. <i>(Source: BOC website)</i></p> <p>The BOC was urged to establish a uniform standard of data gathering from all ports and asked it to clarify discrepancies in its data during the next meeting of the TWG.</p>