



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
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Journal

SESSION NO. 40

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

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CALL TO ORDER

At 3:42 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Ponce Enrile, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Miguel F. Zubiri led the prayer, to wit:

God Almighty, we pray that You will read in our hearts and minds our gratitude for being blessed with the new day of service and love.

We thank You for giving us courage to face challenges, fortitude to battle our demons, and mercy to forgive critics and disbelievers.

As our all-powerful, all-loving Father, bless us with discernment to know the needs of our fellowmen who are hungry, homeless, sick, and insecure. Let us be Your instruments to feed, shelter, cure, and assure them.

Bless us with the magnanimities so that we will give in amounts that will make a difference in their lives. Grant us generosity so that we will give to the poor till it hurts. Help us fulfill our obligations fully and even beyond the goals we set our signatures to.

Please help us to be good stewards of *Your creation* that we merely use and borrow from future generations. Hear our intentions for those ravaged by disasters like the Cagayan Valley floods, victims of typhoons *Basyang* and *Juan*, and from

other disasters that struck us in the *Philippines just this year, both natural and man-made.*

Let us be a channel that will deliver justice to the oppressed, suppressed, and victimized. Please hear our special appeal for the victims of the massacre in Maguindanao. Please help us eliminate the rancor that has divided the country and claimed many lives like that of botanist Leonardo Co, who was caught in the crossfire in the forest of Leyte.

Grant us tolerance that we may hear the other side, invite our adversaries to unite and forge peace and understanding – in our homes, in the Senate, and in the world at large.

All these we ask in Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Emma Lirio-Reyes, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, E. J.	Legarda, L.
Arroyo, J. P.	Osmeña III, S. R.
Cayetano, C. P. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Drilon, F. M.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Ejercito Estrada, J.	Sotto III, V. C.
Enrile, J. P.	Villar, M.
Honasan, G. B.	Zubiri, J. M. F.

With 14 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Guingona, Marcos and Recto arrived after the roll call.

Senator Lapid was on official mission abroad.

Senator Defensor Santiago was on sick leave.

Senators Cayetano (A), Escudero and Lacson were absent.

Senator Trillanes was unable to attend the session as he was under detention.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 39 (November 15, 2010) and considered it approved.

At this juncture, Senate President Enrile relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Ejercito Estrada.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Sotto acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following guests:

- Third year high school students from the Immaculate Conception Academy, Greenhills headed by Ms. Catherine Tria;
- Mayor Nelson Cosuina of Nagcarlan, Laguna and administrator Corsega; and
- Mayor Willie Robles of Baras, Rizal, with councilors Ramon Madignas and Denny Garavillas.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ejercito Estrada welcomed the guests to the Senate.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Availing herself of the privilege hour, Senator Cayetano (P) expressed concern over the increasing number of Filipinos being used as drug couriers by international drug syndicates:

The full text of her speech follows:

I take the floor on a matter of personal and collective privilege to bring attention to the celebration of Drug Prevention and Control Week from November 14 to 20.

As we speak, more than 600 Filipinos are detained in foreign prisons for drug trafficking. In fact, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has raised the alarm on the increasing number of Filipinos arrested abroad for being drug couriers or drug mules. Consecutive warnings have been issued by the DFA to alert Filipinos to the *modus operandi* of drug syndicates. Unfortunately, this has not lessened the number of Filipinos who fall victim to drug syndicates and end up being arrested abroad for drug trafficking.

Drug syndicates have employed the recruitment of individuals for work overseas as a means of using these individuals as drug mules. Drug mules transport illegal drugs through handling of sealed packages, swallowing of drugs, hiding it in their underwear, and even surgically implanting it in their abdominal cavity or placing the drug package in the mules' genitalia.

As of this month, 630 Filipinos are detained in different prisons all over the world. In China alone, 250 of our *kababayans* are detained, 75 of whom are already in the death row. Recently, the Philippine Embassy in Chile also reported a rising number of Filipinos caught for drug trafficking in some countries in South America.

What is more disturbing is that majority of these Filipinos are women. Over 60% of the total number of Filipinos arrested abroad are females.

Last month, a Filipina was sentenced to death for drug trafficking by the Yogyakarta's Lower Court in Indonesia. And just last week, a Filipina was arrested for carrying almost two kilos of heroin in Guangzhou, China.

According to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), drug syndicates prefer women drug mules due to the leniency in the inspection of women in airports. This, in turn, makes women prey to these syndicates.

Drug syndicates have lured our women to allow themselves to be used in this illegal drug trade with a promise of a better life. Many Filipinas would do anything to provide their family with that better life. It is through this aspiration that drug syndicates have found the Achilles' heel of our women.

Authorities have reported that Filipino women choose to leave the country thinking they have legitimate job offers from these drug syndicates. To make it even harder to resist, these drug syndicates facilitate their travel by providing for their plane tickets and even giving them pocket money to spend. However, when they get to their destinations, saying no to these drug syndicates no longer becomes an option as they are already far away from home and they carry the fear that they might get harmed. There are also victims who accept jobs that pay a lot of money and involve a lot of travelling, through delivering packages, without knowing that drugs are inside the packages.

Syndicates even go to the extent of having relationships with Filipinas. Members of drug syndicates con them into becoming drug mules by first courting them through internet chat rooms, then making them their girlfriends or wives.

Existing laws, policies and programs

We have laws, policies and programs that are supposed to protect and advance the rights of our workers, here and abroad.

Among these laws are the Migrant and Overseas Filipino Act (R.A. 8042 as amended by RA 10022), which seeks to protect our OFWs from different forms of abuse; Article 3421 of the Revised Penal Code, which penalizes White Slave Trade or those engaging in the business of prostitution; and the Labor Code of the Philippines, which penalizes different acts of illegal recruitment. We also have the Mail Order Bride Law (RA 6955), which was also created to ensure that our women will be protected from exploitation for economic gains.

Illegal drug trafficking being a transnational crime, coordination with other countries and law enforcement agencies is critical. During the budget hearing of PDEA, they reported that they were able to successfully neutralize an international drug organization through "Operation Homerun" despite insufficient budget. However, much is still left to be done. My dialogues with several of our consular offices abroad have given me reason to believe that we have much work to do back home.

Conclusion

To conclude, however, based on experience, our laws, policies and programs are not enough to deter the rising number of Filipinos, particularly women, who are victimized and used as drug mules. Moreover, according to a recent

report, the DFA has been implementing a policy of not providing legal assistance to drug mules due to lack of budget.

As I speak right now, there may be another Filipina who has fallen victim to a lover, a husband, a friend or recruiter, by agreeing to deliver a package, not knowing it would cost her years in prison, or worse, her life.

In fact, this morning, I received a text message that a group of women who were being trafficked were intercepted in our airport about to board a flight for Bangkok. I have no information at this point if this is a drug-related trafficking incident, but the fact remains that these women were being trafficked and it was only intercepted at the very last hour in the airport. This goes on probably daily or weekly, and there is really much that we should be doing about it.

We must put an end to this now and defend our women from these drug syndicates. For this reason, I am going to file a resolution to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alarming increase in the case of Filipinos, especially women, who are being used as drug mules by international drug syndicates, and to review our existing policies, laws and practices to address this problem.

REMARKS OF SENATOR SOTTO

Senator Sotto confirmed that indeed the use of Filipinos as drug mules has long been a problem of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB). He noted that poverty is a major reason why Filipinos fall victim to international drug syndicates. He noted that Nigerian/West African drug syndicates prey on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in China whose visas are about to expire. He explained that under the scheme, the syndicates help the OFWs renew their visas in a foreign country, such as Malaysia or Thailand, which the Chinese authorities allow; the recruited OFWs are then brought to Malaysia or Thailand, given food, free lodging and tickets to China and the packages of illegal drugs they are supposed to drop off, at the risk of being jailed. He said that the DDB has asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to help the OFWs renew their visas to prevent them from being victimized by the syndicates.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of

Senator Cayetano (P) to the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR ARROYO

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Arroyo spoke on the Papal Nuncio's failure to respond to Senate Resolution No. 33, expressing the concern of the Senate over the gross disproportion of Filipino cardinals to the huge Catholic population of the Philippines.

The full text of his speech follows:

THE PAPAL NUNCIO

On November 7, 2007 or three years ago, the Senate adopted Senate Resolution No. 33, EXPRESSING THE CONCERN OF THE SENATE THAT THE NUMBER OF FILIPINO CARDINALS IS GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE HUGE CATHOLIC POPULATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, BEING THE SECOND COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WITH THE BIGGEST NUMBER OF CATHOLICS.

It stated, among other things, that the Philippines which is "the only Christian country in Asia, with 73 million Catholics, has only three cardinals. On the other hand, India with 16 million Catholics has five cardinals, more than the Philippines; Japan with only 505,000 Catholics has two cardinals; Taiwan with 305,000 Catholics has one cardinal, so with Thailand with 273,000 Catholics." So you can see how disproportionate it is for us.

The Senate resolved to express its concern that the number of Filipino cardinals is grossly disproportionate to the huge Catholic population of the Philippines, being the second country in the world with the biggest number of Catholics.

Accordingly, copies of this resolution were formally transmitted to the newly appointed Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. The CBCP acknowledged receipt of the resolution.

Cardinal Rosales of Manila wrote a letter of appreciation. However, we did not expect the CBCP or the Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines to cheer for themselves.

We expected the answer to come from the *Papal Nuncio*.

Lamentably, the Papal Nuncio did not respond at all to the Senate, as if this Chamber did not exist.

The Senate resolution was asking only for enlightenment, why we had only three cardinals while countries with lesser Catholic populations had a lot more. *Nothing more than edification.*

Since the Papal Nuncio was not giving any answer, we asked Ambassador Dondie Teehankee, the Philippine Ambassador to the WTO in Geneva, to go to the Vatican and seek enlightenment from retired Filipino Cardinal Sanchez, who explained patiently that the elevation to cardinals does not depend upon the number of Catholics in a country but it depends upon the number of dioceses.

The number of dioceses, in turn, depends upon the number of priests. A country may have a big Catholic population but if it does not have many dioceses because it does not have many priests, it cannot have as many cardinals.

The Senate resolution was on a temporal matter. But the Papal Nuncio did not see fit to give the Senate the courtesy of a reply.

The explanation of Cardinal Sanchez was simple and forthright. It cleared the air. We have a big Catholic population, yes, but we do not have many priests. It is as simple as that.

We had to fend for ourselves and get the answers from a retired Filipino cardinal in Rome. We did not get it from the Papal Nuncio to whom it was addressed.

On November 19, the day after tomorrow, the College of Cardinals will meet. We have one active cardinal (Rosales) and two retired cardinals (Sanchez and Vidal). We do not know whether they are allowed to participate.

We have to put on record that a concern of the Senate on a temporal matter was ignored by the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following matters and the Chair made the corresponding referrals:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 2591, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 85, PARAGRAPH (A) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 2592, entitled

AN ACT TO IMPROVE THE PRESERVATION AND ACCESSIBILITY OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2593, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A HYDROGEN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos Jr.

To the Committees on Energy; Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2594, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF PLUMBING ENGINEERING IN THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1378, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO REGULATE THE TRADE OF MASTER PLUMBER," APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Trillanes IV

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2595, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE LIABILITIES OF INDIRECT EMPLOYERS IN JOB CONTRACTING, COVERING OTHER BENEFITS DUE THEIR EMPLOYEES, FOR THIS PURPOSE AMENDING

ARTICLE 106 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Villar

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 2596, entitled

AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE MICRO-CREDIT FINANCING AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3844, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE CODE OF AGRARIAN REFORM IN THE PHILIPPINES," APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Finance

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 277, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE TO HAIL THE RELEASE OF DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI FROM DETENTION AS A TRIUMPH FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Introduced by Senator Legarda

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 278, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH, WOMEN AND FAMILY RELATIONS TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ABOUT THE REAL LEVEL OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND/OR INFECTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUTH, WITH THE OBJECTIVE

OF FORMULATING A NATIONAL DATABASE THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF SEX-RELATED HEALTH ISSUES IN THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Villar

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Youth, Women and Family Relations

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 279, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING CONGRESSMAN MANNY PACQUIAO FOR WINNING OVER ANTONIO MARGARITO DURING A BOXING MATCH HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2010 IN TEXAS, UNITED STATES

Introduced by Senator Villar

To the Committee on Rules

COMMUNICATIONS

Letters from the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, dated 19 and 27 October 2010 and 2 November 2010, respectively, furnishing the Senate with certified true copies of the following:

BSP Circular Nos. 694 and 695, series of 2010, dated 14 and 22 October 2010; and BSP Memorandum Nos. M-2010-037 and M-2010-038, dated 21 and 26 October 2010,

in compliance with Section 15(a) of Republic Act No. 7653 (*The New Central Bank Act*).

To the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies

Memorandum from Executive Secretary PAQUITO N. OCHOA JR., of the Office of the President of the Philippines, dated 29 October 2010, addressed to Department Secretaries, Heads of Executive Commissions and other Executive Offices re ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL BASELINES.

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

Letter from the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs, dated 5 November 2010, transmitting to the Senate the soft copy of the Department's Report to Congress for the period covering January to June 2010.

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Foreign Relations

Letter from the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, dated 8 November 2010, furnishing the Senate with a copy of the Commission on Human Rights Advisory [CHR (IV)-A2010-005], "On the EO 003: Discriminatory or Rights Based? Local Ordinance by the City of Manila," dated 7 October 2010.

To the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Report No. 10, submitted jointly by the Committees on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Rules, on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, introduced by Senator Sotto III, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CONCURREN-
CING IN PROCLAMATION
NO. 50 OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DATED 11 OCTOBER 2010 ENTITLED:
GRANTING AMNESTY TO ACTIVE
AND FORMER PERSONNEL OF THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIP-
PINES AND THEIR SUPPORTERS
WHO MAY HAVE COMMITTED
ACTS OR OMISSIONS PUNISH-
ABLE UNDER THE REVISED
PENAL CODE, THE ARTICLES OF
WAR, OR OTHER SPECIAL LAWS
COMMITTED IN CONNECTION
WITH THE OAKWOOD MUTINY,
THE MARINES STAND-OFF AND
THE MANILA PEN INCIDENT AND
RELATED INCIDENTS,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Dissenting: Senator Arroyo

Sponsors: Senators Guingona III and Sotto III

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 280, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING EMMANUEL
"MANNY" DAPIDRAN PACQUIAO
AS THE GREATEST FILIPINO
ATHLETE FOR HIS ACHIEVE-
MENTS AS THE FIRST BOXER TO
WIN TEN WORLD TITLES IN EIGHT
DIFFERENT WEIGHT DIVISIONS

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 281, entitled

RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT
TO THE COMMEMORATION OF
THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
VOLUNTEERS (IYV) IN THE
PHILIPPINES (IYV + 10) IN 2011,
RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANT
ROLE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF
VOLUNTEERS IN DEVELOPMENT
AND NATION-BUILDING AND
ENJOINING THE PUBLIC TO
ORGANIZE AND SUPPORT VOLUN-
TEERING PROJECTS AND ACTIVI-
TIES TOWARD A MEANINGFUL
IYV + 10 CELEBRATION

Introduced by Senator Recto

To the Committee on Rules

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 271

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 271, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 272, 274, 276, 279 and 280, entitled

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING
MANNY PACQUIAO FOR WINNING

THE WBC SUPER-WELTERWEIGHT
CROWN AGAINST MEXICAN
ANTONIO MARGARITO EARNING
HIM HIS EIGHTH WORLD TITLE.

With the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Sotto, only the title of the resolution was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR SOTTO

Senator Sotto informed the Body that six resolutions, namely Senate Resolution Nos. 271, 272, 274, 276, 279 and 280, were filed commending Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao for his victory over Mexican Antonio Margarito in Dallas, Texas last November 14, 2010. He said that the Committee on Rules convened earlier that day to consolidate the six resolutions, subject to style, since Manny Pacquiao won not just eight but 10 world titles in eight different weight divisions. He added that the resolution filed by Senator Pangilinan was correct with regards to the number of world titles that the boxer has won.

**ADOPTION OF PROPOSED
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 271**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 271, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 272, 274, 276, 279 and 280, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri expressed dismay over the new slogan "*Pilipinas Kay Ganda*" which the Department of Tourism would be using to market Philippine tourism. He noted that Asian countries have always used English in their promotional advertisings: the Philippines had "WOW Philippines" which is now being changed, Thailand has "Amazing Thailand," India has "Incredible India" and Malaysia has "Malaysia, Truly Asia" all of which were aired on CNN and BBC. He wondered what the action plan of the tourism department is with its "*Pilipinas Kay Ganda*" slogan, specifically whether it is targeting foreign tourists. He asked Tourism Sec. Alberto Lim to look into the good points of his predecessors, for instance, Richard Gordon who came out with "WOW Philippines" and "Wonders of the Philippines." He

also noted that in the past, Regine Velasquez made a song and dance commercial in Tagalog for local tourists who, however, do not have much spending power unlike foreign tourists. He narrated that he visited Singapore with his family before Congress convened in July 2010 and was amazed at how the island-country was able to attract tens of millions of tourists. He manifested that during the hearing on the DOT budget, he would ask Secretary Lim to make clarifications about the slogan. He said that he has no objection to the slogan in Filipino if the target market is the local tourists but, he argued, it would be a different story if the slogan would be used to attract tourists from China, Korea, Japan, the European Union countries and the United States.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR LEGARDA

At the outset, Senator Legarda congratulated Senator Zubiri on the launching of his book, "Bukidnon: The Philippine Frontier." On the DOT new slogan, she revealed that she came to know about it during a hearing on the DOT budget. She rued that some Filipinos have this tendency to reinvent themselves and to assume that something needs fixing, and in the case of the new administration, its people always think that what the past administration did was always wrong. She cautioned, however, that the effectiveness of the new slogan in the market is yet to be tested.

Asked on the cost of changing the slogan "Wow Philippines" to "*Pilipinas Kay Ganda*," taking into consideration all the campaign materials for the marketing campaign, Senator Zubiri surmised that the Tourism Department must have spent a considerable amount as he clarified that he only learned about it from newspaper reports and that he only wanted to comment on it.

Senator Legarda then proposed that the Body look into the following matters during the hearing on the DOT budget: 1) the cost of the new campaign which, according to media reports, was P200 million; 2) if the slogan has an English version "Beautiful Philippines" supposedly intended for overseas markets; 3) if the internet site of "Beautiful Philippines" leads to a pornographic site, as reported in some quarters; and 4) the identity of the advertising agency which created the slogan in view of reports that the DOT undersecretary owns an advertising agency.

Senator Legarda asked further whether there would be a massive campaign for the slogan or whether it was simply a change of slogan with everything remaining the same. Senator Zubiri replied that the change in the DOT program has to be a marketing strategy. However, he pointed out that Thailand, India and Malaysia have not changed their slogans for several years.

Senator Legarda asserted that it is not good advertising sense to keep on changing names with every change of administration. She recalled that in 1985, when she was still working as a staff of the Philippine Consulate in Los Angeles, Cebu was marketed as an island in the Pacific because at that time the Philippines, which has just emerged from martial rule, did not enjoy a good image abroad.

With regard to the "Beautiful Philippines" slogan, Senator Zubiri said that it was not mentioned in any of the news items and it is a matter which Secretary Lim has to clarify.

Senator Legarda said that she has more questions for Secretary Lim to answer during the hearing of his agency's budget. Hopefully, she said, the slogan suggested by Senator Recto "Only in the Philippines" would not have a negative connotation like it is "only in the Philippines" where tourists have fronts seats in a bus hostage-taking incident, or it is "only in the Philippines" where foreigners can go on sex tourism. On the contrary, she said that such slogan should mean "Only in the Philippines" can people find pristine white beaches, *dugongs*, whale sharks, Philippine eagle, 110 indigenous tribes and churches built 400 to 500 years ago.

Senator Zubiri stressed that he has nothing against using tourism slogans in Filipino but was concerned that only Filipinos will understand it. He posited that the Tourism Secretary should be a Jack of all trades, an expert in security matters, among others. What is more important than coming up with a marketing slogan, he said, is for the DOT to come up with an action plan to address issues such as the travel advisories against the Philippines, security concerns for tourists and other related problems.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR SOTTO

Senator Sotto said that the phrase "Only in the Philippines" is usually equated with bad things and was invented by the Filipinos to vent their frustration

when things go bad; therefore, it would not be a good slogan. In this light, he suggested that resource persons from the *Komisyon sa Wikang Pilipino* be invited and asked about the use of Filipino or Tagalog in tourism slogans. He posited that the "Amazing Thailand" slogan has never been changed because it works.

Asked whether the "WOW Philippines" advertising worked, Senator Zubiri replied that 3.5 million tourists came a year or two ago during the watch of Secretary Durano. He said that it worked but pointed out, however, that it is not enough.

Senator Sotto said that three million visitors in one year showed that the program does not work. He said that the Philippines should get at least about eight to ten million visitors a year, including domestic tourists. He added that the United States has a very successful domestic tourism. He asserted that the slogan was changed because it is not working and the people should not take it against any department should it want to use Filipino in promoting the country.

Senator Zubiri clarified that if the target is local tourists, there is nothing to debate about but if the target is foreign or international tourists, it is a good idea to use a language that they understand. He stressed that the Philippines would not be able to attract more foreign tourists unless it has greater advertising in inter-national media. He noted that "Amazing Thailand," "Incredible India" and "Malaysia Truly Asia" advertising campaigns are aired on CNN. He added that the only time the Philippines is on CNN is when Manny Pacquiao fights or when there is an incident like the hostage-taking in Luneta. He clarified that his manifestation was just a constructive criticism of a slogan that was not disclosed to the Body. He reiterated that he does not have anything against the Filipino language and neither does he believe that reformatting a tourism plan is bad.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONASAN

Senator Honasan said that the DOT cannot project anything less than what is substantially true. He remarked that it is not a question of whether the Philippines is a beautiful country because it is. The real question, he said, is whether the marketing campaign or the slogan reflects the reality that would

potentially make the Philippines a tourist attraction. He then asked whether the country has an infrastructure for tourism in place and whether there exists a manageable peace and order condition. He remarked that the deeds of world-class athletes like Manny Pacquiao, who has put the Philippines on the map, have already generated the curiosity of foreigners about the country and its people.

Senator Honasan said that he would support the effort of Senator Zubiri to urge the DOT to look more deeply into the tourism infrastructure that reflects on its global marketing campaign. The more substantial aspect of the tourism program that reflects the truth of what is happening on the ground, he emphasized, is what would potentially increase the number of tourists and depict to the world that the Philippines is a beautiful country with good people.

For his part, Senator Zubiri agreed that indeed there should be an overall view of the tourism industry. He narrated that when he visited Cambodia, he was amazed at how it has progressed through the years with a modern airport, beautifully paved four-lane highways, world-class hotels, and a well-trained people ready and willing to help tourists especially when they visit the ancient ruins of Angkor Wat.

Moreover, Senator Zubiri said he admired the efforts that a small country like Botswana devote to its tourism industry as it capitalizes only on its natural resources such as its high-end safaris. He said that the international airports in the Philippines would be put to shame when compared to the airports of Botswana. He stressed the need for a holistic approach to tourism, in the same manner as the Boholano people have imbibed a culture of tourism by always making sure that visitors have a grand time for the entire duration of their stay in Bohol.

Lamenting the sorry state of the country's airports, such as the Cagayan de Oro City airport which cannot accommodate planes bigger than a Boeing 737, Senator Zubiri said that there are no direct flights from Korea and Japan to the city, except through Davao. Thus, he said that tourists cannot see the beautiful provinces along the way such as Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and Camiguin.

The DOT, Senator Zubiri stressed, should find an appropriate slogan for the tourism industry that can be easily recalled like "Malaysia Truly Asia," "Incredible India," and "Amazing Thailand."

He asserted that the absence of such a slogan is the reason tourists do not hear much about the Philippines, while those who capitalize on infomercials like Phuket, Thailand get the most number of tourists even if they have far less beautiful attractions.

Noting the seeming absence of long-term policy planning in government, Senator Honasan underscored the need to establish a very clear, long-term sustainable order of priorities, foremost of which is foreign investments in natural attractions to spur economic activities and, in turn, fuel the tourism industry.

REFERRAL OF MANIFESTATION TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the manifestation of Senator Zubiri together with the interpellations thereon, was referred to the Committee on Tourism.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 225

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 225, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING FORMER KOREAN AMBASSADOR JOONG-KYUNG CHOI FOR HIS EFFORTS IN STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

With the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Sotto, only the title of the resolution was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

SPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR ANGARA

Senator Angara informed the Body that upon the return of President Aquino from the APEC meeting, there was a simultaneous news release that nine countries of the APEC, including the United States, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia, were forging a free-trade arrangement called the "Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement." He said that the conspicuous absence of the Philippines in the list will make it the

odd man out in the most dynamic region in terms of economic growth in trade and investments.

In this light, Senator Angara expressed the need for the Senate to reciprocate the hospitality of former Korean Ambassador Choi who has made dynamic and growing Philippine-Korean relations possible. He noted that aside from causing the enormous increase in the arrival of Koreans and making them the largest group of tourists in the Philippines, Ambassador Choi has further helped in making Korea the top official development assistance grantor and donor to the Philippines. He disclosed that only recently, Korea gave US\$3 million to the Philippine Carabao Center to strengthen its genetic resources so that the carabaos would yield better meat for the table and more milk to substitute the US\$500 million worth of dairy imports from New Zealand and Australia. He also disclosed that Korea gave US\$5 million to Bohol to help the province develop a 100-hectare seaweed plantation because it has proven that biofuel ethanol can be extracted from seaweed rather than sourced from sugarcane which competes with food and some other products. He added that seaweed is the future source of biofuel which is renewable and environment-friendly.


Senator Angara attributed the closer Philippine-Korean relations to former Ambassador Yu who became Foreign Minister of Korea, to his successor former Ambassador Choi who was also later on appointed by the Korean President as Senior Economic Adviser, and to incumbent Ambassador Lee.

Expressing hope for the passage of the resolution, Senator Angara bared that in his own province of Aurora, former Ambassador Yu donated the first integrated rice mill, the most modern by far in the country, which every provincial government now hopes to own.

COAUTHORS

Senator Sotto manifested that Senators Honasan, Legarda, Marcos, Ejercito Estrada and himself are coauthors of the resolution.

ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 225 was adopted by the Body. 

COAUTHORS

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, Senator Escudero was made coauthor of Senate Bill No. 2386 (granting civil service eligibility to qualified government employees); and Senator Angara of Senate Bill No. 62 (creating an National Student Loan Board).


ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned

until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, November 22, 2010.

It was 4:59 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


EMMA LIRIO REYES
Secretary of the Senate

Approved on November 22, 2010 