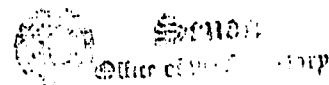


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session



SENATE
S. NO. 2241

'21 MAY 26 P5:17

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by Senator **VICENTE C. SOTTO III**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE
PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The novel coronavirus, called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2), has changed our way of life. It is something that we have to live with, whether we like it or not. That is why measures have been put in place so as this virus will not stop us from living and going on with our lives. The strict adherence to health, social and economic protocols aims to mitigate the negative effects of this virus in our personal health, economic activities as well as the general welfare of all sectors of society especially our family, work environment among others.

While we recognize the need to follow the minimum health standards at present, even with the availability of vaccines against COVID-19, the country must also prepare itself in the long-run by allowing a dedicated government agency that shall serve as the premier research and development (R&D) institute in the field of virology, encompassing all areas in viruses and viral diseases in humans, plants, and animals.

The creation of the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) will make the Philippines become globally-competitive in the field of Science and Technology, particularly in virology, when it comes to detecting, identifying and responding to viruses that affect our people and our resources.

It will conduct pioneering and innovative research and development activities on viruses affecting the lives of Filipinos and our resources. Likewise, the Filipinos will have access to cheaper, home-grown technologies in the form of diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines. And more importantly, our country will drastically increase our pandemic readiness. Hence, the agency's establishment is undeniably important for the protection of the health of Filipinos and preservation of nation.

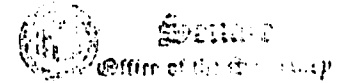
Viruses are fast-evolving, and we have no choice but to cope. Unfortunately, the country has no institution that focuses on the diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccine development against viruses. With the rise in number of viral diseases, especially those that infect both animals and humans, it is important to have our own state-of-the-art research center dedicated for virology. The VIP will focus on these important viruses to immediately address and forecast future outbreaks in the Philippines while also building the expertise of Filipino researchers in the field of virology.

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) is our best weapon in this time of crisis. We need the brilliance and expertise of our scientists, balik-scientists and foreign experts; but we also need to acknowledge that we need an institution that will handle, study and provide solutions to and against viruses and other similar organisms.

Safeguarding our present health status is ensuring the survival of mankind.

Thus, the need to have our own virology institute in the soonest possible time is strongly sought for.


VICENTE C. SOTTO III



SENATE
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Introduced by Senator **VICENTE C. SOTTO III**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE
PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “**Virology and**
2 **Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) Act of 2021.**”

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State:

- 4 a) To protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill
5 health consciousness among them;
- 6 b) To undertake appropriate health, manpower development, and
7 research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems;
- 8 c) To recognize that science and technology are essential for national
9 development and progress;
- 10 d) To give priority to research and development, invention, innovation,
11 and their utilization; and
- 12 e) To support indigenous, appropriate, and self-reliant scientific and
13 technological capabilities, and their application to the country's
14 productive systems and national life.

15 To this end, the State shall give high priority to the establishment of an
16 institute that will conduct research and development activities and in-depth
17 studies on the viruses affecting the lives of its people and resources, such as
18 plants and animals, is vital for the protection of the health of its people and
19 the preservation of the national life.

20 **SEC. 3. Objectives.** - This Act seeks to establish a virology institute
21 that shall focus on the following key development areas for virology science
22 and technology applications in plants, animals, and humans:

- 1 a) Research on viruses using a modern approach such as molecular
2 biology and its application or biotechnology;
3 b) Development of diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics (Molecular
4 Biotechnology);
5 c) International cooperation and network of databases of virus
6 infections;
7 d) Operation of a virus gene bank, virus genome laboratory, and virus
8 reference laboratory to focus on viruses circulating in the Philippines
9 for disease prevention and epidemiological studies; and,
10 e) Operation of a virus high containment laboratory dedicated to the
11 study of highly infectious and highly pathogenic viruses.

12 **SEC. 4. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act:

- 13 a) *Bacteriophage* refers to any group of viruses that infect specific
14 bacteria, usually causing their disintegration or dissolution;
15 b) *Biosafety* refers to a condition in which the probability of harm,
16 injury and damage resulting from the intentional and unintentional
17 introduction and/or use of a regulated article is within acceptable
18 and manageable levels;
19 c) *Biosecurity* refers to a strategic and integrated approach to analyzing
20 and managing relevant risks to plant, animal and human life and
21 health and associated risks for the environment. It is based on
22 recognition of the critical linkages between sectors and the potential
23 for hazards to move within and between sectors, with system-wide
24 consequences;
25 d) *Diagnostics* refers to methods, tests, techniques, and tools in viral
26 diagnosis for plants, animals and humans;
27 e) *Therapeutics* refers to anti-viral, bacteriophages, nanotechnology
28 treatment approach, nucleic acid-based treatment, remedial agents,
29 drugs for the treatment of viral diseases and infections of plants,
30 animals and humans;
31 f) *Vaccines* refer to products that induce or stimulate active acquired
32 immunity by producing antibodies to a specific infectious agent. It
33 helps the body's immune system to recognize and fight pathogens
34 like viruses or bacteria;
35 g) *Virology* refers to the scientific discipline concerned with the study of
36 the biology of viruses and viral diseases of plant, animal, and human
37 of medical importance and pandemic potential including the
38 distribution, pathogenicity, viral cytopathicity, biochemistry,
39 physiology, molecular biology, biotechnology, ecology, tropism,
40 spillover or interspecies transmission, evolution, and clinical aspects
41 of viruses;

42 **SEC. 5. Creation of the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the**
43 **Philippines (VIP).** - The Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines
44 (VIP).is hereby created, which shall be an attached agency under the

1 Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for purposes of policy and
2 program coordination to ensure alignment with national policies and priorities.

3 The VIP shall serve as the premier research and development institute
4 in the field of virology, encompassing all areas in viruses and viral diseases in
5 plants, animals and humans. It shall be a venue for scientists, research
6 institutes and other organizations here in the Philippines and abroad, to work
7 collaboratively to study viruses of agricultural, industrial, clinical, and
8 environmental importance.

9 **SEC. 6. Powers, Functions, and Duties.** - To accomplish its
10 mandate, the VIP shall have the following powers, functions, and duties:

- 11 a) Serve as the lead convener for the formulation of the National
12 Virology Research Agenda, in consultation with all concerned
13 stakeholders, that will encompass researches involving viruses of
14 plant, animal, and human importance.
- 15 b) Undertake scientific and technological research and development
16 (R&D) in the field of virology.
- 17 c) Conduct product research and development (R&D) in the areas of
18 but not limited to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.
- 19 d) Promote and undertake the transfer of the results of scientific
20 research and development to concerned government agencies,
21 industry, and academe.
- 22 e) Promote and advocate virology research ethics, biosafety, and
23 biosecurity.
- 24 f) Develop and maintain an information system on virology science
25 and technology for use by both the public and private sectors.
- 26 f) Develop and implement, together with other entities concerned,
27 programs for strengthening scientific and technological capabilities
28 in virology and relevant disciplines through human resource
29 development, infrastructure, and institution building.
- 30 g) Undertake policy research, technology assessment, and other
31 related studies on virology.
- 32 h) Provide laboratory and technical services on virology.
- 33 i) Promote and advocate the national programs on virology science
34 and technology.
- 35 j) Establish linkages with local and international partners.

36 **SEC. 7. Organizational Structure.** - The VIP shall be headed by a
37 **Director-General** and two (2) **Deputy Directors-General**, one (1) for
38 Research and Development, and one (1) for Support, Policy, and Linkages.
39 The VIP shall be composed of the following divisions:

- 40 a) Virus Research
- 41 b) Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research
- 42 c) Vaccines Research
- 43 d) Technical Services and Training
- 44 e) Policy, Planning, and Linkages
- 45 f) Finance and Administration

1 The **Deputy Director-General** for Research and Development shall
2 head the Virus Research, Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research, and
3 Vaccines Research Divisions. The **Deputy Director-General** for Support,
4 Policy, and Linkages shall head the Technical Services and Training, Policy,
5 Planning, and Linkages, and Finance and Administration Divisions.

6 The VIP shall have technical and administrative support staff and
7 consultants. The consultants may come from the public and private sectors
8 on a consultancy or contractual basis, and shall be granted honoraria or
9 allowances in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

10 Subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management
11 (DBM), the VIP shall determine its organizational structure, create new
12 divisions or units as it may deem necessary, and appoint its officers and
13 employees.

14 For this purpose, the VIP shall, in consultation with the DBM,
15 determine the necessary position qualifications and standards for its
16 personnel following civil service laws, rules, and regulations.

17 **SEC. 8. Qualifications of the VIP Director-General and Deputy**
18 **Directors-General.** The VIP Director-General and the Deputy Directors-
19 General shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the
20 recommendation of the DOST Secretary.

21 The Director-General with a rank of an undersecretary shall be a
22 qualified expert possessing at least a Bachelor's Degree in Biology,
23 Microbiology and/or an allied discipline; preferably with a doctorate degree in
24 medical sciences and/or in virology-related discipline with three to five years
25 of experience in diagnostic virology. He shall have overall responsibility for the
26 activities including the supervision of all the staff working in the VIP. In
27 addition, he shall be directly responsible for reporting to the Secretary of
28 Science and Technology and the President of the Philippines the results of the
29 various diagnostic assays and research studies performed in the institute.

30 Each of the Deputy Directors-General of the VIP shall have a rank of
31 assistant secretary. The Deputy Director-General shall possess at least the
32 educational background of the VIP Director-General.

33 The Director-General and the Deputy Director-Generals shall be
34 appointed by the President with the consent of the Commission on
35 Appointments for a term of seven years. Of those first appointed, the Director-
36 General shall hold office for seven years, one Deputy Director-General for five
37 years, and the other Deputy Director-General for three years. Appointment to
38 any vacancy shall be only for the unexpired portion of the term of the
39 predecessor.

1 **SEC. 9. The Governing Board.** - The Governing Board shall be the
2 highest policy-making body for the scientific and technological activities of the
3 VIP, composed of the following:

- 4 a) The Secretary of the DOST, as Chairperson;
- 5 b) The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH), as Co-Chairperson;
- 6 c) Secretary of Department of Agriculture (DA), as Co-Chairperson;
- 7 d) The Secretary of Trade and Industry, as may be represented by an
8 Undersecretary for Industry Development and Trade Policy;
- 9 e) The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, as may be
10 represented by an Undersecretary (DENR), as member;
- 11 f) The Undersecretary for Research and Development of the DOST, as
12 member;
- 13 g) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, as may be represented by the
14 Undersecretary for International Economic Relations, as member;
- 15 h) The Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), as
16 member;
- 17 i) The Director of the Research Institute for Tropical Medical Medicine
18 (RITM), as member;
- 19 j) The Director-General of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as
20 member;
- 21 k) The Director-General of the VIP, as member;
- 22 l) The Executive Director of University of the Philippines-National
23 Institute of Health (UP-NIH), as member; and
- 24 m) Three (3) representatives from the private sector appointed by the
25 President of the Philippines, as nominated by the Governing Board.
26 These representatives shall have distinguished themselves in the field
27 of medical virology, genomics, plant virology, animal virology,
28 epidemiology, genetic engineering, and other related disciplines.

29 The private sector shall be represented by the following:

- 30 i. an association of medical or allied-health professionals
- 31 ii. Philippine Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association or from a
32 recognized pharmaceutical industry
- 33 iii. An academic institution with research and development activities in
34 the field of medical virology, genomics, plant virology, animal
35 virology, epidemiology, genetic engineering, and other related
36 disciplines

37 The VIP shall serve as the Secretariat of the Governing Board with the
38 VIP Director acting concurrently as the Executive Director of the Secretariat.

39 **SEC. 10. Functions of the Governing Board.** The Governing Board
40 shall be the policy-making body for the scientific and technological activities
41 of the VIP. It shall:

- 1 a) Promulgate rules and regulations regarding the management and
- 2 operation of the VIP
- 3 b) Collect fees, through its Secretariat, in connection with the exercise
- 4 of its regulatory powers
- 5 c) Apply for, receive, and accept bequests, grants, and donation of
- 6 funds, equipment, materials and services needed for the attainment
- 7 of its objectives;
- 8 d) Provide grants, research fund, materials and equipment for the
- 9 conduct of virology researches by both public and private higher
- 10 education institutions;
- 11 e) Establish an editorial office of a refereed journal of virology and a
- 12 library which shall collect and preserve books, journals and other
- 13 reference materials in the field of virology; and
- 14 f) Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the
- 15 DOST Secretary.

16 **SEC. 11. Compliance with Existing Government Regulations.** The
17 VIP shall comply with the procedures, rules and regulations of other
18 Government Offices mandated to oversee the practice of virology and other
19 related disciplines as well as the operation of laboratories, clinics, diagnostics
20 and similar facilities; but not limited to the following: procurement of
21 specimen, supplies, materials, and equipment; handling, storage, the study
22 of specimen, and disposal of specimen, equipment and other forms of waste.

23 The Department of Health (DOH) through the Health Facilities and
24 Services Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) shall establish guidelines and regulate
25 the operation of virology-related facilities to be assisted by the DA-Bureau of
26 Animal Industry, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry, and other relevant
27 stakeholders.

28 The DOH-Health Human Resource Development Bureau shall establish
29 guidelines on the practice of virology profession in the country to be assisted
30 by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and its health-related
31 accredited professional organizations, together with the Commission on
32 Higher Education (CHED), Department of Labor and Employment, Civil
33 Service Commission, Bureau of Immigration, and other relevant government
34 offices.

35 The DENR through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and
36 the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) shall ensure
37 compliance of the VIP and other virology facilities with regards to waste
38 disposal.

39 Finally, research proposals prior to its undertaking within the VIP shall
40 be reviewed by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) or
41 through its accredited ethics review committees or entities. Processes and

1 regulations of the Food and Drug Administration, Health Technology
2 Assessment Council and/or of the Intellectual Property Office of the
3 Philippines shall be strictly observed prior to commercialization of any drug,
4 vaccine, diagnostics, device and other similar products.

5 An Inter-Agency Task Force may be created to monitor compliance of
6 all virology-related professions and facilities throughout the country to be
7 headed by the DOH-Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau.

8 **SEC. 11. Engagement of Balik Scientists and Foreign Experts.** -
9 The VIP may engage the services of Balik Scientists and foreign experts who
10 shall work together with the local scientists and experts, following the terms
11 of reference and compensation structure in accordance with Republic Act No.
12 11035 or the Balik Scientist Program Act and other existing laws.

13 **SEC. 12. International Cooperation.** - The VIP shall establish
14 strategic partnerships with the world's leading scientists, virology centers and
15 institutes, and conduct innovative and pioneering researches that will
16 advance the frontiers of virology in the country. The VIP can enter into a
17 memorandum of agreement or understanding with international partners,
18 upon the approval of its Governing Board and in compliance with existing
19 laws, rules, regulations and issuances of the Department of Foreign Affairs
20 (DFA). The DFA shall provide technical, legal and other forms of assistance to
21 the VIP.

22 The Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the
23 Philippines shall also be consulted upon approval of the Governing Board of
24 the VIP.

25 **SEC. 13. Interdepartmental Cooperation.** - The VIP shall collaborate
26 with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Finance (DOF), Food
27 and Drugs Administration (FDA), RITM and other relevant government
28 agencies, in mobilizing resources such as but not limited to research
29 information, reports, technical expertise, equipment, materials and supplies
30 as may be required to implement this Act.

31 **SEC. 14. Inter-Agency Contribution of the VIP.** - The research
32 outputs of the VIP shall be integrated with the plans made by the Inter-Agency
33 Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases, as created by Executive Order
34 No. 168 s. 2014, or its successor body, for the management of public health
35 emergencies relating to infectious diseases.

36 The research outputs of the VIP shall also be integrated into other plans
37 relating to disease control and prevention.

38 **SEC. 15. Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs).** - The Department of
39 Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Health (DOH), Public-Private
40 Partnership (PPP) Center and the Department of Science and Technology
41 (DOST) shall collaborate in seeking Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs) for the

1 development of new industries, products and services where the VIP shall be
2 the main research and development unit.

3 The DOST may also request the assistance of other national and local
4 government agencies in seeking PPPs where the VIP shall be the main
5 research and development unit

6 **SEC. 16. Promotion of Virology Industry.** - The DOST, in partnership
7 with the DOH-Health Promotion and Communication Service and Disease
8 Prevention and Control Bureau and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-
9 Board of Investments, shall jointly develop an industry roadmap for products
10 and services that can be created, improved, or optimized by research from the
11 VIP. As far as practicable, the industry roadmap shall include the use of local
12 materials in the development of new products. The industry that shall be
13 developed or established resulting from the VIP researches shall be included
14 in the national government's priority industries for incentives.

15 **SEC. 17. Promotion of Knowledge-transfer and Research in the**
16 **Academe.** - The VIP shall promote the creation of hubs and programs for
17 virology research and development in the academe, particularly in state
18 universities and colleges (SUCs). Towards this end, the VIP shall assist SUCs
19 in the creation of virology courses and programs, open internships for
20 qualified students of higher education institutions (HEIs) and collaborate with
21 HEIs in the creation of virology research centers.

22 The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall collaborate with
23 the DOST in the promotion of HEI-VIP partnerships.

24 **SEC. 18. Protection of VIP-developed Intellectual Property.** - The
25 Governing Board of the VIP shall ensure that all technologies developed
26 exclusively by the VIP with full funding from Filipino taxpayers shall be
27 protected by intellectual property laws in accordance with Republic Act No.
28 10055 or the Technology Transfer Act of 2009 and other applicable laws Any
29 patent grant or property right awarded or granted to the VIP shall be held by
30 and in the name of the Philippine Government. In the case of partnerships,
31 where the VIP is a collaborating research partner, the Governing Board shall
32 ensure that technologies co-developed by the VIP shall also be co-attributed,
33 with the corresponding intellectual protections, to the Philippine Government.

34 **SEC. 19. Procurement of Specialized Materials, Equipment and**
35 **Services.** - The VIP shall undertake the procurement of specialized materials,
36 equipment, and services to be used by the VIP in its operation and
37 administration, in the most expeditious manner, as exemptions from the
38 provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 or the "Government Procurement Reform
39 Act" and other relevant laws.

40 Provided, that during public health emergency, the following shall be
41 observed:

- 1 a) Less stringent procurement procedures allowing negotiated
- 2 procurement, higher caps on allowable down payment for
- 3 procurement of goods, supplies, equipment and services;
- 4 b) Authority to the DOST Secretary to approve advance payment of
- 5 more than 15% for procurement of goods, supplies, equipment and
- 6 services, for faster facilitation;
- 7 c) Simplified process for foreign procurement especially with
- 8 specialized equipment, reagents, and supplies not available in the
- 9 Philippines;
- 10 d) Exemption from customs duties and taxes for all VIP supplies and
- 11 equipment procured abroad; and,
- 12 e) Exemption from taxes on income generated through training and
- 13 other delivery of services of VIP.”

14 **SEC. 20. Official Site of VIP.** - A lot with an area equivalent to at least
15 five (5) hectares under the administration of the Bases Conversion and
16 Development Authority (BCDA) within the New Clark Economic Zone in Tarlac
17 shall be allocated exclusively for the Institute, its research facilities, and
18 laboratories. The biosafety infrastructure shall be designed based on risk
19 assessment for handling specific pathogens following the World Health
20 Organization (WHO) guidelines on the establishment of a virology laboratory
21 in developing countries.

22 **SEC. 21. Entitlement to Magna Carta Benefits.** - Qualified
23 employees of the VIP shall be covered by Republic Act No. 8439, otherwise
24 known as “Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and Other
25 Science and Technology Personnel in Government”.

26 **SEC. 22. Virology Research Fund.** - There is hereby created a Virology
27 Research Fund to be used and administered by the VIP following existing
28 government budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations. The
29 Fund shall be sourced from the following:

- 30
- 31 a) The initial amount of Two Billion pesos (P 2,000,000,000.00) to be
- 32 taken from the current fiscal year’s appropriation, in case the General
- 33 Appropriation Act (GAA) was approved before this law is enacted.
- 34 b) The income produced from its operations, technology transfer, and
- 35 licensing agreements.
- 36 c) Loans, contributions, grants, bequests, gifts, and donations whether
- 37 from local or foreign sources. Provided, that acceptance of grants,
- 38 bequests, contributions, and donations from foreign governments shall
- 39 be subject to the approval of the President upon the recommendation
- 40 of the Secretary of the DOST and Secretary of the Department of Foreign
- 41 Affairs (DFA). The Secretary of DOST, with the approval of the NEDA
- 42 and subsequently, the Department of Finance (DOF), is hereby granted
- 43 the authority to enter into loan agreements with foreign financial
- 44 institutions.

1 **SEC. 23. Authority to Solicit, Receive Donations, Grants and the**
2 **Like.** – The VIP may solicit, negotiate with, and receive from any public or
3 private domestic or foreign sources legacies, gifts, donations, grants,
4 endowments, contributions or other transfers of ownership and/or
5 possession of real or personal properties of all kinds in favor and for the
6 benefit of the VIP, which shall be exempt from donor's tax and shall all be
7 part of the special account in the general fund managed by the Department
8 of Finance.

9 The VIP shall prescribe the measures necessary for the proper use,
10 maintenance and safekeeping of said donations, grants, endowments,
11 contributions or transfers and the compliance of the terms and conditions
12 thereon, if any, in accordance with pertinent accounting and auditing laws,
13 rules and regulations.

14 **SEC. 24. Use of Income.** - The VIP shall be authorized to use all of the
15 income generated from its operations, as well as donations, bequests, grants
16 for the upgrading if its physical and human resources, and for the
17 augmentation of its budget.

18 **SEC. 25. Mandatory Adoption of Publicly Funded Technologies.**
19 Mandatory adoption of publicly funded and generated technologies developed
20 by the VIP whenever feasible and practicable, shall strictly be implemented by
21 all government entities or instrumentalities All national government agencies
22 (NGAs), government-owned-and-controlled corporations (GOCCs), state
23 universities and colleges (SUCs), and local government units (LGUs)
24 performing science and technology development projects shall adopt publicly-
25 funded technologies.

26 **SEC. 26. Annual Report.** - The VIP shall submit its annual report to
27 the President and to the Committees on Science and Technology in both
28 Chambers of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year
29 following the effectivity of this Act. The annual report shall provide a full and
30 detailed account of the status of the implementation of this Act and policy
31 recommendations.

32 **SEC. 27. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.** – There shall
33 be a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the implementation of this
34 Act, which shall be jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committees on
35 Science and Technology of the Senate and House of Representatives. It shall
36 be composed of, as members, the Chairpersons of the Senate Committees on
37 Health and Demography and Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform, the
38 Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Food and Agriculture of the
39 House of Representatives, and two others from each chamber of Congress to
40 be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of
41 Representatives.

1 **SEC. 28. Appropriations.** - The sum of Two Billion Pesos (Php
2 2,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial operation fund of the
3 VIP from the current fiscal year's appropriation. Thereafter, the amount
4 needed for its operation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.
5

6 **SEC.29. Transitory Provisions.** - Upon the establishment of the VIP,
7 the functions and assets of the concerned DOH units shall be transferred to
8 the VIP without need of conveyance, transfer of assignment.

9 (a) For the year, during which this Act was approved, the unexpended
10 portion of the budget of the offices and units transferred shall be utilized
11 for establishing the VIP and initiating its operations, including the
12 formulation of the rules and regulations necessary for the
13 implementation of this Act.

14 (b) To the greatest extent possible and in accordance with existing laws, all
15 employees of the affected offices, agencies and units shall be absorbed
16 by the VIP. Personnel hired on a permanent basis and with
17 appointments attested by the CSC who may be affected by the transition
18 of DOST units to VIP, or who will not be absorbed in the new positions
19 of the new staffing pattern of the different offices in the VIP, shall have
20 the option to:

21 (1) Be transferred to other units/offices within the DOST without
22 reduction in pay; or

23 (2) Avail of the applicable retirement benefits and separation incentives
24 as provided by existing laws.

25 (c) Incumbent DOST officials and employees of affected DOST offices may
26 be considered as a VIP official or employee, subject to competency
27 evaluation and CSC regulations.

28 (d) Research grants acquired during the transition of DOST transferred
29 units to VIP shall be utilized solely for the grants' intended purposes for
30 each of the affected units or offices.

31 (e) Existing contracts and agreements entered into by the affected offices
32 with third parties prior to the enactment of this Act shall remain valid.

33 **SEC. 30. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - The DOST Secretary,
34 in consultation with DBM, DOH, Civil Service Commission, and other relevant
35 government agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations
36 within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act.

37 **SEC. 30. Separability Clause.** - If any portion or provision of this Act is
38 declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in
39 full force and effect.

1 **SEC. 31. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and
2 regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the
3 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

4 **SEC. 32. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
5 its publication in the Official Gazette or any two (2) newspapers of general
6 circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,