



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 8
Tuesday, August 9, 2022

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Prepared by the
LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL SERVICE
Senate of the Philippines

SESSION NO. 8
Tuesday, August 9, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

PRAYER

The Body observed a minute of silent prayer.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Renato N. Bantug Jr. called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

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|------------------------|---------------------|
| Angara, S. | Legarda, L. |
| Binay, M. L. N. S. | Marcos, I. R.* |
| Cayetano, A. P. C. S.* | Padilla, R. C. |
| Cayetano, P. S. | Pimentel III, A. K. |
| Dela Rosa, R. B. M. | Poe, G. |
| Ejercito, J. V. G. | Revilla Jr., R. B. |
| Escudero, F. J. G. | Tolentino, F. T. N. |
| Estrada, J. | Tulfo, R. T. |
| Gatchalian, W. | Villanueva, J. |
| Go, C. L. T. | Villar, C. A.* |
| Hontiveros, R. | Zubiri, J. M. F. |
| Lapid, M. L. M. | |

With 20 senators physically present and three senators virtually present, or a total of 23 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Villar (M) arrived after the roll call.

Thereafter, Senate President Zubiri wished Senator Villar (C) a speedy recovery after the latter tested positive for COVID-19, and cautioned all the Members to be extra careful especially at such time when COVID-19 cases are on the rise.

*Senators Cayetano (A), Marcos, and Villar (C) attended the session online because they tested positive for COVID-19.

Senator Villanueva also wished Senators Villar (C), Cayetano (A) and Marcos a speedy recovery.

DEFERMENT OF APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body deferred the consideration and approval of the *Journal* of Session No. 7 (August 8, 2022).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Mayor Henry Joel Teves, together with LGU officials of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro;
- National President Nelson A. Sarapuddin, Chief-of-Staff Boy F. Llames, and Gov. Adobis Bautista of the Fraternal Order of Eagles;
- PMSgt. Jan Vincent Dela Peña, PSMS Gierby Lacorte, PSSgt. Raquel Lacorte, PCMS Lutche Bellocura, PCpl. Dominador Edos Jr., PMSgt. Kristine Franz C. Ramos, PCpl. Claudine Mae Carcillar, and PCpl. Randolph S. Maraggun of the PNP Karate Team;
- Ms. Herlene Nicole P. Budol, 2022 *Binibining Pilipinas* 1st Runner-up; and
- European Union Ambassador Luc Véron.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTIONS

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONSTITUTE THE CONGRESS COMPLEMENT FOR THE CREATION OF THE CONGRESS-PARLIAMENTARY BANGSAMORO FORUM AS PROVIDED FOR IN REPUBLIC ACT 11054 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION

Introduced by Senator Padilla

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 3, entitled

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE FREQUENT CHANGES IN THE PHILIPPINE BANK NOTES AND COINS INITIATED BY THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP)

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 4, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE BUDGETARY APPROPRIATIONS, AND THE EXPENDITURE AND IMPLEMENTATION THEREOF, OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INDUSTRIALIZATION AND EMPLOYMENT-GENERATION INITIATIVES, WITH THE END VIEW OF DETERMINING THE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR A MULTI-YEAR EXPENDITURE PLAN FOR BOLSTERING FILIPINO OR "TATAK PINOY" PRODUCTIVE SECTORS AND ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVE GROWTH ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Finance

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 5, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE K TO 12 LAW FOR THE PURPOSE OF CRAFTING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATING COMPLEMENTARY AND AMENDATORY LEGISLATION TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE LAW AND ENSURE ITS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INTEGRATION INTO THE PHILIPPINE BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION AND ACHIEVE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 6, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND REVISION OF CODES TO REVIEW AND STUDY THE 1987 CONSTITUTION FOR POSSIBLE REVISION ON THE PROVISIONS PARTICULAR TO THE FORM, STRUCTURE, AND POWER OF GOVERNMENT, ECONOMY AND PATRIMONY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Padilla

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Revision of Codes

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 8, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO CONDUCT THE VETTING PROCESS OF THE NOMINEES THAT WILL COMPOSE THE MARAWI COMPENSATION BOARD FOR PURPOSES OF THEIR APPOINTMENT BY THE PRESIDENT AS PROVIDED UNDER R.A. 11696 OR THE MARAWI SIEGE VICTIMS COMPENSATION ACT OF 2022

Introduced by Senator Padilla

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 9, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. TO RESUME BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR PURPOSES OF COOPERATION ON OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA

Introduced by Senator Padilla

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 11, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC SCHOOL CLOSURES AND RECOVERY MECHANISMS FOR THE BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE EFFECTS THEREOF, IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE GAPS, ISSUES, AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND CRAFTING COMPLEMENTARY LEGISLATION

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 12, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON STRENGTHENING THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND FORMULATING A DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORK TO FURTHER OPERATIONALIZE THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLEMENTARITY TO ACHIEVE THE COUNTRY'S NATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN EDUCATION

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 13, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RISING NUMBER OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS AMONG THE YOUTH, FOR THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND INTEGRATING EFFECTIVE PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN THE BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Youth

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 14, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RECOGNITION AND PROMOTION OF THE FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION OF DEAF EDUCATION, AS MANDATED UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11106 OR THE FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE ACT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING ITS IMPACT TO DEAF LEARNERS AND TEACHERS UNDER THE K TO 12 BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING IMPLEMENTATION GAPS, ISSUES, AND CHALLENGES, AND CRAFTING COMPLEMENTARY OR AMENDATORY LEGISLATION

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 15, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10968 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT TO ENSURE THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS OBJECTIVES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 16, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE EIGHT NEW NATIONAL ARTISTS BY VIRTUE OF PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION NO. 1390

Introduced by Senator Legarda

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 17, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE FOR HIS STELLAR AND INVALUABLE SERVICE TO THE NATION AS THE 16TH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 18, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE TEAM, WHO HAVE WON IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPORTS CATEGORIES, THUS BRINGING

THE PHILIPPINES' MEDAL HAUL TO A TOTAL OF TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-SEVEN (227) MEDALS, DURING THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED 31ST SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES (SEA GAMES) HELD FROM MAY 12 TO 23, 2022 AT HANOI, VIETNAM

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 19, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE UNTIMELY AND HORRIFIC DEATH OF FILIPINO LAWYER AND FORMER SENATE LEGISLATIVE STAFF, ATTY. JOHN ALBERT "JAL" LAYLO AFTER A RANDOM SHOOTING IN PHILADELPHIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND CONDEMNING IN THE STRONGEST SENSE THE SENSELESS SLAYING OF A FELLOW FILIPINO

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 20, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS AND THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPOSING AND COLLECTING TAXES FROM MULTINATIONAL ONLINE STREAMING SERVICES AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY IN GENERAL

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 21, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JUNNA TSUKII FOR BAGGING THE GOLD MEDAL IN THE WOMEN'S KUMITE - 50 KILOGRAM DIVISION IN THE 2022 WORLD GAMES HELD IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 22, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE 2022 ORDER OF NATIONAL ARTISTS AWARDEES FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF PHILIPPINE ARTS AND CULTURE

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 23, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CARLOS EDRIEL POQUIZ YULO FOR WINNING THREE GOLD MEDALS IN THE FLOOR EXERCISE, VAULT AND PARALLEL BARS EVENTS AND A SILVER MEDAL IN THE ALL-AROUND EVENT IN THE MEN'S DIVISION OF THE 9TH SENIOR ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD LAST JUNE 17-18, 2022 IN DOHA, QATAR

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 24, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY AND TO FIND WAYS TO INCREASE ITS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ENABLE ITS INTEGRATION INTO THE GLOBAL ELECTRONICS VALUE CHAIN

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Economic Affairs

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 25, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT A REVIEW, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, OF THE EXISTING LAWS WITH PROVISIONS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED AS DISCRIMINATORY TO WOMEN, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF AMENDING AND/OR REPEALING THESE AS MANDATED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9710 OR THE MAGNA CARTA OF WOMEN

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (P)

To the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 26, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED CULTURE OF ABUSE, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT THE PHILIPPINE HIGH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF CREATING SAFER SPACES FOR CHILDREN IN ALL EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11313 OR THE SAFE SPACES ACT

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 27, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY THE REMAINING CHARGES AGAINST DETAINED FORMER SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT RECONTATIONS GIVEN BY KEY WITNESSES IN HER DRUG CASES AND MOVE FOR HER RELEASE FROM UNJUST AND ARBITRARY DETENTION

Introduced by Senators Hontiveros and Pimentel III

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 30, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE OF HEALTH FINANCING IN THE PHILIPPINES INCLUDING THE STATE OF HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, HEALTH PERSONNEL, HEALTH INSURANCE AND THE LINKAGES BETWEEN LOCAL AND NATIONAL HEALTH INITIATIVES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF DETERMINING THE NEEDED LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Finance; and Health and Demography

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 31, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED LACK OF ACCESS OF CERTAIN FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF ALL OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Angara

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

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 32, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE RECURRENT BROWNOUTS EXPERIENCED BY OCCIDENTAL MINDORO ELECTRIC CONSUMERS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 33, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM INTER-AGENCY

COMMITTEE AND ITS RECOMMENDATION FOR THE COUNTRY TO EMBARK ON
NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; and Science and Technology

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 34, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ELECTRIFICATION OF ALL PUBLIC
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; and Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 35, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ISSUES SURROUNDING THE CO-EXISTENCE
OF THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRICITY MARKET OPERATION (PEMC) AND THE
INDEPENDENT ELECTRICITY MARKET OPERATOR OF THE PHILIPPINES (IEMOP) WITH
THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE OPERATION
OF THE WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY SPOT MARKET (WESM)

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 36, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 8479 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE DOWNSTREAM OIL INDUSTRY DEREGULATION
ACT OF 1998 WITH THE END IN VIEW OF INTRODUCING REMEDIAL LEGISLATION AS
MAY BE NECESSARY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 37, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE RECENT MEMORANDA ISSUED BY THE
NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION (NEA) ON THE APPOINTMENT OF
GENERAL MANAGERS OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES WITH THE END IN VIEW OF
PROTECTING THE INTEREST OF ELECTRIC CONSUMERS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 38, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE IMPACT OF GREEN ENERGY AUCTION PROGRAM ON THE ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING AFFORDABILITY OF SUPPLY OF ELECTRIC POWER

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 39, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE QUALITY OF ELECTRIC POWER SERVICE IN THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF PALAWEÑOS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 40, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER NEW CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES WITH THE END IN VIEW OF MITIGATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS WHILE ENSURING ENERGY SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 41, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPETITIVE SELECTION PROCESS IN THE PROCUREMENT OF POWER SUPPLY BY DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES AND ITS EFFECT ON ELECTRICITY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 42, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE COUNTRY'S ENERGY TRANSITION PLAN, OR LACK THEREOF, IN RELATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S MORATORIUM ON GREENFIELD COAL POWER PLANTS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF DEVELOPING AND ENSURING AN EQUITABLE, SECURE, AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 43, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE FUTURE RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE END IN VIEW OF MITIGATING GHG EMISSIONS WHILE ENSURING ENERGY SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 44, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STRATEGY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO MAXIMIZE THE COUNTRY'S REMAINING POTENTIAL GEOTHERMAL SOURCES TOWARDS ENERGY SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 45, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE STATUS OF THE COUNTRY'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 46, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES TO DETERMINE ITS COMPLIANCE WITH OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF SAFEGUARDING THE GRID AND ENSURING CONTINUOUS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 47, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLANS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

TO PROVIDE LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO POWER SUPPLY SHORTAGES WITH THE
END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THE QUALITY, RELIABILITY, SECURITY, AND
AFFORDABILITY OF ELECTRIC POWER SUPPLY IN THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 48, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ELECTRIC POWER OPERATIONS OF
UNDERPERFORMING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES, ITS EFFECT ON QUALITY AND PRICE
OF ELECTRICITY, AND THE REMEDIES TO HOLD THESE ENTITIES ACCOUNTABLE

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 49, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S (DOE)
NATIONAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THE COUNTRY'S ENERGY SECURITY AND SELF-
SUFFICIENCY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 50, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S
NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE
ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION (AFF) HELD LAST JULY 17, 2022 AT RIZAL MEMORIAL
STADIUM, MANILA

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 51, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE TEAM FILIPINAS - THE
PHILIPPINE WOMEN FOOTBALL NATIONAL TEAM - FOR THEIR MAIDEN VICTORY IN
THE 12th ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP HELD IN MANILA,
PHILIPPINES AND FOR BRINGING HONOR AND PRIDE TO THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 52, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS AND CONTINUING VIABILITY OF THE COUNTRY'S EXISTING FLOOD CONTROL MASTER PLAN AND PENDING FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS UNDER THE DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) AND METRO MANILA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MMDA), WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING A COMPREHENSIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT SOLUTION TO THE FLOODING PROBLEM THAT WOULD IMMEDIATELY BRING RELIEF TO THE PUBLIC AND IDENTIFY URGENT INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE MITIGATION EFFORTS OF ADVERSE EFFECTS TO THE COMMUNITIES, AND PREVENT SIMILAR DISASTERS IN THE FUTURE,

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Public Works

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 53, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED RECURRING AND PROLONGED WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION EXPERIENCED BY CUSTOMERS OF MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC., IN LIGHT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THEIR FRANCHISE UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11600 AND THEIR REVISED CONCESSION AGREEMENT

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 54, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM FOR THEIR VICTORY AT THE AFF WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 55, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED CROPS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY PRODUCTS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THE EFFICACY OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS IN IMPROVING THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS, MAINTAINING PRUDENCE IN THE ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS FOR AGRICULTURAL INTERVENTIONS, AND REALIZING THE VISION OF A FOOD-SECURE AND RESILIENT PHILIPPINES WITH EMPOWERED AND PROSPEROUS FARMERS AND FISHERS

Introduced by Senator Escudero

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 56, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE BACKLOG IN THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION PLATES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROMOTING INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE OPERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND ON MATTERS INVOLVING PUBLIC INTEREST, ENSURING SOUND UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS, AND ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT MECHANISMS TO ADDRESS BOTTLENECKS IN THE DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Escudero

To the Committee on Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 57, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM FOR THEIR HISTORIC WIN AT THE ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION (AFF) WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP HELD LAST JULY 17, 2022

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 58, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE MASUNGI-BAYOG RANGER TEAM OF THE MASUNGI GEORESERVE FOUNDATION FOR WINNING IN THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER AWARDS 2022 OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) AND WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS (WCPA)

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 59, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10929 OR THE FREE INTERNET ACCESS IN PUBLIC PLACES ACT AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10650 OR THE OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING ACT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING IMPLEMENTATION GAPS, ISSUES, AND CHALLENGES, DETERMINING THEIR EFFECTIVITY IN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND LEARNING CENTERS, AND CRAFTING COMPLEMENTARY AND/OR AMENDATORY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF UNINTERRUPTED, FAST, AND RELIABLE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING ESPECIALLY DURING PANDEMICS, ENDEMICS, OUTBREAKS, AND OTHER EMERGENCY OR CRISIS SITUATIONS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Science and Technology

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 61, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE STATUS OF THE PEOPLE'S TELEVISION NETWORK INC. (PTNI), ALSO KNOWN AS PTV, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7306, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10390, AND ENSURING FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Introduced by Senator Legarda

To the Committee on Public Information and Mass Media

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 62, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE MEMBERS OF THE FILIPINAS FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2022 ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION (AFF) WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced by Senator Go

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 63, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING ERNEST JOHN UY OBIENA FOR WINNING THE BRONZE MEDAL IN THE POLE VAULT EVENT IN THE MEN'S DIVISION OF THE 2022 WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP HELD LAST JULY 15-25, 2022 IN OREGON, USA

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 64, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT RAILWAY PROJECTS, WITH THE END VIEW OF CRAFTING MEASURES THAT SHALL FAST- TRACK CONSTRUCTION AND PREVENT FURTHER DELAY OF THEIR COMPLETION

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committee on Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 65, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS GEARED

TOWARDS THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, SUCH AS REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8435, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES MODERNIZATION ACT OF 1997," AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10601, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES MECHANIZATION (AFMECH) LAW," WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE POLICY GAPS IN IMPROVING AND ACCELERATING SAID MODERNIZATION, THEREBY ADDRESSING PRODUCTIVITY, POVERTY, AND FOOD SECURITY

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 67, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS AND ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE AUDIT AND REVIEW OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS THEREBY ENSURING FULL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS SET BY THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE ON STRUCTURAL SAFETY AND INTEGRITY WITH THE END IN VIEW TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE AGAINST AVOIDABLE DAMAGES TO PROPERTY AND LOSS OF LIVES AND BUILD BETTER INFRASTRUCTURES AND TO REVIEW THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE FOR POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO CONFORM WITH PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Public Works; and Local Government

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 69, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALARMING RISING NUMBER OF TEXT SCAMS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES THAT WOULD ENSURE THE PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF EVERY FILIPINO AGAINST CYBERCRIMES

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 70, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, ESPECIALLY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9003, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "ECOLOGICAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2000," AND DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT OF ALL CONCERNED AGENCIES IN RELATION TO THEIR COMPLIANCE THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Legarda

To the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Deputy Secretary for Legislation , Atty. Edwin B. Bellen read the following matters and the Chair made the corresponding referrals:

RESOLUTIONS

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE 2022-2028 MEDIUM-TERM FISCAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Introduced by Senators Zubiri, Legarda, and Villanueva

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 71, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING EJ OBIENA FOR HIS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AT THE WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 78, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE EFFECTS OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE ON THE COUNTRY'S ENERGY SECURITY AND AFFORDABILITY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; and Economic Affairs

Proposed Senate Resolution No. No. 79, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE STATUS OF THE PHILIPPINE UPSTREAM OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 87, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE OIL AND EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF INTRODUCING REMEDIAL LEGISLATION AS MAY BE NECESSARY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 80, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ISSUES SURROUNDING SERVICE CONTRACT

38 OR THE MALAMPAYA DEEP WATER GAS-TO-POWER PROJECT WITH THE END IN VIEW OF SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRY'S ENERGY SECURITY

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 81, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ENORMOUS UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF THE PHILIPPINE "BLUE ECONOMY," AND TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING LAWS IN BOOSTING ITS DEVELOPMENT

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Economic Affairs

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 82, entitled

RESOLUTION TO DIRECT THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT THAT 14 FOREIGN-ASSISTED PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WORTH 1.61 TRILLION HAVE BEEN DELAYED, WHILE 13 OF ITS PROJECTS WORTH 8.6 BILLION WERE UNFINISHED OR SUSPENDED IN 2021, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE COMMUTING FILIPINO PUBLIC

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Finance; and Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 83, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON SPORTS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE GILAS PILIPINAS MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM WITH THE END IN VIEW OF REVIEWING RELEVANT LAWS AND POLICIES TO ENSURE OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE IN FUTURE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS COMPETITIONS AND TO PROTECT THE WELFARE OF FILIPINO ATHLETES

Introduced by Senators Go, Villar (M), Villanueva, Tolentino, and Cayetano (AP)

To the Committee on Sports

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 85, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE COUNTRY TO CONTAIN AND SUPPRESS MONKEYPOX WHICH HAS BEEN DECLARED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PREVENTING THE OVERBURDENING OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Introduced by Senators Go and Padilla

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 86, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO IMMEDIATELY SUPPORT THE RESTORATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES AND NATIONAL LANDMARKS WHICH WERE DAMAGED BY THE 7.0 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE WHICH STRUCK NORTHERN LUZON, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION OF THEIR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THE REGENERATION OF AFFECTED JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

Introduced by Senators Go and Padilla

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. No. 87, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING OLYMPIC POLE VAULTER ERNEST JOHN "EJ" OBIENA FOR BRINGING HONOR AND PRIDE TO THE PHILIPPINES BY WINNING THE HISTORIC, FIRST EVER MEDAL AT THE 2022 WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN EUGENE, OREGON

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (P)

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 88, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "FILIPINAS," FOR QUALIFYING IN THE 2023 WOMEN'S FIFA WORLD CUP FOLLOWING THEIR HISTORIC QUARTERFINAL WIN AGAINST CHINESE-TAIPEI IN THE AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP IN PUNE, INDIA

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (P)

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 89, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "FILIPINAS," FOR WINNING THE COUNTRY'S FIRST EVER ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE RIZAL MEMORIAL STADIUM IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (P)

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 92, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

OF COVID-19 VACCINES AMIDST REPORTS OF UNUSED AND EXPIRED COVID-19 VACCINES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 93, entitled

RESOLUTION AMENDING SECTION 13 (6) RULE X OF THE RULES OF THE SENATE

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 94, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE CREATION OF A TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS AND COMBAT THE SPREAD OF MONKEYPOX DISEASE WITH THE END IN VIEW OF A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND HOLISTIC GOVERNMENTAL APPROACH

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 95, entitled

RESOLUTION RECONSTITUTING THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MARAWI CITY REHABILITATION

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 96, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO JAPANESE KARATEKA JUNNA VILLANUEVA TSUKII FOR WINNING GOLD IN THE KUMITE-50KG EVENT DURING THE 2022 WORLD GAMES HELD IN ALABAMA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND FOR BRINGING HONOR AND PRIDE TO THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 97, entitled:

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO POLE VAULTER ERNEST JOHN UY OBIENA FOR HIS HISTORIC BRONZE MEDAL WIN IN THE 2022 WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP HELD FROM JULY 15 TO 25, 2022 AT OREGON, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 98, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS, AND CULTURE AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE K-12 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 99, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING ANGELINE COLONIA FOR HER OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AT THE ASIAN YOUTH AND JUNIOR WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 100, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES TO HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF THE SALT PRODUCTION INDUSTRY AS A JOB GENERATOR AND AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS**

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

- Mayor Mohammad Juhar D. Disomimba of Tamparan, Lanao del Sur;
- Mayor Sodais D. Dimaporo of Binidayan, Lanao del Sur;
- Mayor Khaledyassin D. Papandayan of Tubaran, Lanao del Sur; and
- Governor Yshmael I. Sali and several mayors from Tawi-Tawi.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Noting the number of people crowding the session hall, Senator Cayetano (P) inquired what is the current protocol being implemented by the Medical and Dental Bureau (MDB). She said that personally, she prefers to have an air purifier by her side to avoid contracting the virus as she had to protect her mother who is now in her 70s.

In hoping that the medical team has readied the proper health and safety protocols for everyone entering the Senate, she admitted that the presence of senators' staff and resource persons could not be limited, especially when a Member of the Chamber is defending a bill.

As Senate President Zubiri assured that he would ask the Senate medical team to brief the senators during their caucus, Senator Cayetano (P) requested that the discussions be made on the next session day as she would be leaving early to celebrate her daughter's birthday.

Senator Villanueva agreed to the sentiment of Senator Cayetano (P), saying that the health and safety of the senators, their staff, the Secretariat and Senate guests must be ensured, to avoid transmitting coronavirus to their family members with comorbidities or medical conditions.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA

Senator Estrada stated that Senator Escudero has filed a bill which seeks to postpone the forthcoming barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, and that a similar bill which he filed has not yet been referred to the appropriate committee. In the interest of time, he then requested for its referral so that those involved in the elections would have time to prepare for the outcome of the proposed measure.

Senator Villanueva informed the Body that the bill filed by Senator Escudero was referred to the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation chaired by Senator Marcos, who is currently on sick leave due to COVID-19. Consequently, Senator Estrada inquired if Senator Marcos could be convinced to either hold a virtual committee hearing, or to allow her vice chairperson to take over on her behalf.

In expressing support for Senator Estrada's appeal, Senate President Zubiri inquired if the postponement of the barangay elections was primarily heard by the Committee on Local Government in the last Congress. Senator Villanueva replied that the matter was only heard by the said committee during the Sixteenth Congress but that in the succeeding congresses, the measure was heard by the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation.

Senator Villanueva affirmed that the Committee on Local Government heard the postponement of the barangay elections in the Sixteenth Congress, particularly the last amendment on its extension, and that the matter was heard by the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation during the 17th and 18th Congresses. He stated that Senator Escudero's bill which was recently filed on the subject had been referred to both the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation and the Committee on Local Government.

For his part, Senate President Zubiri joined Senator Estrada in finding out the sense of the Senate and of the House of Representatives on the postponement of the barangay elections, disclosing that when he and Senator Binay met with COA the day before, they learned that the barangay elections have an allocated budget of P8 billion. He cautioned that the money would be wasted if the COMELEC is not informed early enough of the postponement of the barangay elections. He believed that the sooner the Body resolves the issue, the sooner the money would be saved for the National Treasury or for other government programs.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR EJERCITO

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Ejercito delivered the following speech, entitled “All Aboard! Approaching Growth and Development; *Paparating na sa Kaunlaran,*” to wit:

Sa aking pag-iikot gamit ang aking bisikleta o motor, madalas kong masaksihan ang sitwasyon ng ating mga kababayan sa lansangan. Sila ay mga estudyante, mga manggagawa na papasok sa kani-kanilang mga trabaho—sila ay mga commuters. Araw-araw silang nakikipagsapalaran, matiyagang naghihintay, at nag-aabang ng masasakyang jeep, bus, o MRT. Ito na ba ang new normal sa ating pampublikong transportasyon?

Ako ay tumitindig ngayong araw bilang pakikiisa sa ating mga kababayang commuter sa panawagang magkaroon ng ligtas at maayos na pampublikong transportasyon. Ang pagsasaayos ng ating mass transport system ang magbibigay kalutasan sa matagal na nating suliranin sa trapik. Mababawasan ang mga pribadong sasakyan sa ating mga lansangan—bibilis hindi lamang ang daloy ng trapiko kundi ang pag-usad ng ating ekonomiya.

Naniniwala ako na ang pagpapalakas at pagpapaunlad ng ating modernong transportasyon ang magsisilbing susi sa pagbubukas ng mas maraming oportunidad para sa atin at sa ating mga kababayan.

One of the reasons also why we are lagging behind our ASEAN neighbors in terms of foreign direct investments is because of two factors: weak infrastructure and, what we have discussed yesterday, the high cost of electricity. And this we have to address and prioritize.

Nakikiisa rin po ang inyong lingkod sa ating mga kasama sa sektor ng agrikultura sa hangarin nilang magkaroon ng abot-kayang pamamaraan upang maihatid ang kanilang mga ani sa merkado. Kung episyente ang pagbiyahe ng mga produkto, mas mabilis itong maipapasa sa mga mamimili sa mas mababang halaga. Kapansin-pansin na sa iba't-ibang maunlad na bansa, pinakamasigla ang komersiyo sa mga terminal at istasyon ng tren.

Let us adopt a policy of moving more people instead of moving more cars.

At this juncture, Senator Ejercito flashed on the screen two different illustrations.

Kung inyo pong makikita sa ating slide, iyan po kung nakikita ninyo, kapag kotse at panay sasakyan ang nasa lansangan, iilang tao lamang—para maigalaw, para makalipat ang mga tao ay napakaraming sasakyan. Ang kumbinasyon ng isang tren na 1,000 passengers ang capacity ay katumbas nito ang 15 buses or anywhere from 250 to 1,000 cars lalo na kung nag-iisa lamang ang nakasakay sa kotse. So, iyan po. What does it take to move 1,000 people? It is one train, or 250 cars, or 15 buses. At ito ay naaayon din sa mga adbokasiya nina Senator Pia, Senator Loren, at Senator Risa tungkol sa carbon footprints. Kung mayroon tayong tren—kung inyong makikita—iyon lamang din po; iisang makina, compared to 250 combustion engines that are running.

Kapag mabagal ang daloy ng trapiko, mabagal din ang daloy ng ekonomiya. Ayon sa huling report ng Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), P3.5 bilyon na halaga ang nawawala sa traffic kada araw. Maaari pa itong umabot hanggang P5.4 bilyon kada araw sa taong 2035 kung hindi tayo makapagbibigay ng agaran at pangmatagalang solusyon.

Sa bagong ulat ng Numbeo Traffic Index 2022, nasa ika-12 puwesto sa pinakama-traffic na lugar sa buong mundo ang Maynila, at nangunguna na naman sa lahat ng bansa sa Southeast Asia. Ayon naman sa ulat ng TomTom Traffic Index 2021, nasa pang-18 puwesto ang Metro Manila sa 404 na siyudad sa 58 na mga bansa sa buong mundo na may pinakamabigat na daloy ng traffic.

Dahil dito ay ganoon kalayo ang narating ng ating railway system. Hindi rin tuluyang makaaarangkada ang ating ekonomiya.

In the latest available Global Competitiveness Report, we ranked 102nd out of 141 countries, with a score of 41.5 out of 100 in terms of our traffic infrastructure. Among the Asian countries, the Philippines received the lowest-rated railway service with a score of 2.4, ranking 86th out of 101 countries globally. Meanwhile, on the ground, this means long lines in terminals, congested roads. The Filipino commuters suffer the consequences of an inefficient transport system.

In terms of regional accomplishment, the Philippines continue to lag behind its ASEAN neighbors in the share of the foreign direct investments (FDI). While numerous factors affect FDI, this data reflects a global competitiveness, [and] it means that foreign investors continue to shy away from investing in our country.

In a span of 10 years, from 2010 to 2015, the Philippines ranked sixth among ASEAN countries in terms of foreign direct investments, trailing behind Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and now, Vietnam. From 2016 to 2020, the Philippines ranked far fourth as it secured only US\$8,740 million, compared to Vietnam, which ranked third with US\$13.8 million foreign direct investments. Unfortunately, FDI is just one of the most immediate issues we need to address.

Dati po, ang Pilipinas ay palaging nasa top five ng ASEAN. Pero ngayon ay naunahan na rin tayo ng Vietnam.

Ang aking matagal nang panukala ay ang pagpapatibay sa ating railway system. Ito ang magiging hudyat sa tuluy-tuloy na kaunlaran, at magsisilbing sandigan ng ating ekonomiya.

Hindi maikakaila na ang mababang kalidad ng imprastruktura sa bansa, katulad ng railway system, ay dahil sa mababa ring paglaan ng pondo para rito.

Sa panahon ni dating Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, nagkaroon tayo ng pag-asa dahil sa hindi hamak na mas mataas na public infrastructure spending sa ilalim ng kaniyang Build, Build, Build Program, kung saan nag-target na maglaan ng P8 trillion para sa imprastruktura.

From 2010 onwards, the average spending for public infrastructure is a meager 2.68 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Towards the end of the past administration, it surged to a record-high P1.12 trillion, or equivalent to 5.8 percent of the GDP. The ideal spending is supposedly 5 percent to 8 percent of the gross domestic product, but our country has been only allotting 2 percent of our gross domestic product for our infrastructure development.

The Build, Build, Build Program was expected to bring the country to the golden age of Philippine infrastructures with new roads, railways, and other flagship projects in the pipeline.

In the railway sector, the ongoing railway projects of the Department of Transportation include the Light Rail Transit (LRT 1) Cavite Extension (Baclaran to Bacoor); MRT 7 that goes to San Jose Del Monte and Quezon City; Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP); the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), which includes PNR Clark Phase 1 (Tutuban to Malolos) and PNR Clark Phase 2 (Malolos to Clark); PNR Calamba (Solis to Calamba), and PNR Bicol for the South Long Haul.

The other projects in the pipeline are the Mindanao Railway Network Phase 1 that will link Tagum, Davao del Norte, Davao City, and Digos, Davao del Sur; LRT-2 West Extension Project; the MRT-4 Project; and the Subic-Clark Railway Project.

For the Visayas region, we vow to advocate the rehabilitation of the Panay and Cebu railways. We expect that these will bring massive development in the region and stimulate economic growth in the countrysides. We are confident that these will be included in the pipeline and will be prioritized with the latest pronouncement of President Bongbong Marcos.

Tayo po ay nagtitiwala na ang proyektong ito ay maipagpapatuloy, maisasakatuparan, at mapapakinabangan ng ating mga kababayan sa mga susunod na taon. Kaakibat nito ay ang aking pangako na patuloy ang pagsuporta upang masiguro na mapondohan ang iba't-ibang proyekto sa patuloy na pagsasaayos ng transportasyon sa bansa.

“A developed country is not place where the poor have cars. It is where the rich ride the public transportation.” *Ito marahil ang pinakasimpleng depenasyon ng kaunlaran. Ito ay sinabi ni Gustavo Petro na dating mayor ng Bogota at ngayon ay presidente na ng Columbia.*

Ang pagsusulong natin na magkaroon ng moderno, konektado, ligtas, episyente, at makakalikasang railway system ay nagsimula sa ating pag-aaral at paniniwala na ito ay maghahatid ng malawakang kaunlaran. Katulad ng ating mga mauunlad na karatig bansa sa buong mundo, naging mahalagang parte ang railway systems sa paglago ng kanilang ekonomiya.

In fact, I had the opportunity to attend the Sustainable Urban Transport Planning and Management Seminar in Singapore hosted by the Land Transport Authority Academy. This was sometime in 2015 and I had the opportunity to talk to the Minister of Transport of Singapore at that time. *Ang sabi nga niya sa akin, “We took a risk by investing heavily on infrastructure. We were not even sure if it is going to work at that time, but we are glad that we took that risk.”*

Naging solusyon ang pagkakaroon ng maayos na railway system sa pagresolba ng kanilang problema sa transportasyon at paglago ng kanilang ekonomiya.

Hindi ba’t pangarap din natin ang isang bansa kung saan maayos na nakakapaghanapbuhay ang mga mamamayan at may magandang quality of life dahil episyente ang pampublikong transportasyon? Nagnanais tayo ng isang bansa kung saan maunlad ang sektor ng agrikultura, mura ang produksiyon at ang presyo ng mga bilihan dahil konektado ang mga sakahan sa merkado. Ito ay isang bansa na kung saan umiiral ang kapayapaan at kaunlaran dahil abot kamay ng bawat Pilipino ang oportunidad.

Malayo-layo na rin ang narating ng adbokasyang ito. Una tayong naniwala rito simula noong makita natin ito. Ako ay naging saksi noong panahon ng aking ama, noong siya ay presidente, na kung saan nasa drawing board na ang North Rail, South Rail, at ang New Clark International Airport na dapat na sanang isagawa. Ito ay dalawang dekada nang nakalipas at puspusan ang pagsasalita natin tungkol dito simula noong ako ay maging miyembro ng Kongreso noong 2010 at ng Senado noong 2013.

Noong Seventeenth Congress ay ibinuhos natin ang ating suporta sa pagdepensa at pagpasa ng Department of Transportation budget kung saan nakatulong tayo na mapondohan ang ilang railway projects katulad ng LRT-1 Cavite Extension; LRT Line 1 North Extension; LRT Line 2 West Extension; LRT East Extension; Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP)-Phase 1; North-South Commuter Railway (NCSR) Project, iyong Malolos to Tutuban; North-South Commuter Railway Project Phase 2, Tutuban to Matnog; at ang Mindanao Railway System.

Ako po ay naging parte rin ng ilang high-caliber meetings na naukuwento ko noong namatay si Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. I again reiterate that we owe so much to this person. Naging saksi po ako sa dinner meetings, sa mga high-powered meeting with transport officials, at doon sa dinner kung saan inanunsyo ni Prime Minister Abe that Japan will undertake the North-South Commuter Line and the Manila Subway System Project. Kaya po nagpapasalamat tayo sa Japan lalung-lalo na kay Prime Minister Abe, sa kanilang transport officials, at sa JICA, na sila po ang gumawa ng North-South Commuter Line at Metro Manila Subway System. Sana po ang Mindanao Railway System at iyong South Line, iyong papuntang Bicol, ay maisunod na rin natin.

“Full speed ahead.” *Iyan po ang marching order ni President BBM sa kanyang katatapos lamang na State of the Nation Address. Ako ay nabuhayan ng loob dahil ang aking adbokasiya ay isa sa mga nabanggit na prayoridad ni Pang. Bongbong Marcos. Malinaw ang kaniyang naging mensahe sa pagsasaayos ng sektor ng transportasyon: “Full speed ahead.”*

President Marcos’ marching order to the Department of Transportation means two things: first, building on the accomplishment of the previous administration to keep the momentum; and second, expanding the scope of the present administration’s infrastructure program to place transportation infrastructure at the center of development of other sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and general economic activity.

The statement of the President during the SONA serves as a map in laying the tracks. Let us make the railway system and infrastructure the backbone of our economy.

Bukod sa benepisyo nito sa ating kababayan at sa kalikasan, ito rin ay solusyon sa mababang kumpiyansa ng mga foreign investors upang mamuhunan dito sa ating bansa.

We have always dreamt of making the railway stations as economic hubs where business districts, industrial estates, commercial areas, agriculture or food terminals are present and booming. Likewise, this will surely spread out the development from Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao to the far flung areas of the country.

Kung makikita ninyo sa illustration, ang bawat railway station sa bawat probinsiya ay may pagkakataon na tayo ay magtayo ng mga industrial estates, commercial areas, business parks, and food terminals. Kumbaga, magkakaroon tayo ng mga economic hubs, growth development areas sa bawat probinsiya at hindi na kinakailangan magsiksikan pa ang lahat sa Metro Manila, sa Cebu, at Davao dahil dito lamang ang oportunidad.

Through the railway system, we will now be able to spread out the development, create jobs and opportunities in the different provinces.

Kapag ito ay naisakatuparan, magkakaroon ng "Luzon growth triangle" na magpapasigla ng takbo ng ekonomiya at aalalay sa tuluy-tuloy na kaunlaran sa rehiyon. Ang "growth triangle" na ito ay magkokonekta sa Subic, Manila, at Batangas ports. Ito ay hindi lamang magdadala ng kaunlaran sa rehiyon kung hindi kasiglaan na rin ng ekonomiya sa buong Pilipinas dahil sa mga posibleng maililikhang mga trabaho at oportunidad.

The growth triangle shall include the full development of Clark International Airport—a modern railway system, and vital road network to ensure seamless delivery of goods, services, and people. This should also evolve into an investment magnet that would attract both foreign and local investors.

Lubos din akong naniniwala na ang maayos na railway system ay susi sa kaayusan at pangmatagalang kapayapaan sa Mindanao. Panahon na upang matapos ang kaliwa't kanang kaguluhan at karahasan na siyang nagpapahirap sa ating mga kababayan. Dapat matigil na ang insurgency sa eastern side, at rebelyon sa Western at Central Mindanao.

Gagawin po natin kapag kumalat na po ang development at magkaroon ng oportunidad through the railway system ay tingin ko, ito ay magdadala ng oportunidad at trabaho doon sa mga lugar na salat sa kaunlaran sa pamamagitan ng Mindanao Railway Network na magkokonekta sa iba't-ibang probinsiya sa Mindanao. Masoslosyonan na rin natin ang kakulangan ng oportunidad sa iba't-ibang rehiyon na siyang pangunahing sanhi ng mga pag-aklas at rebelyon.

Ang railway system ang siyang maghahatid ng trabaho, kabuhayan at mismong kapayapaan sa Mindanao. Dahil sa oportunidad na dala ng railway system, mareresolba na natin ang isa sa mga pinakasinasabing pangunahing dahilan ng pagtangan ng armas ng ilan sa ating mga kababayan—ang kahirapan at kagutuman.

The Mindanao Railway will pave the way to lasting peace in Mindanao. Pati na rin sa ibang parte ng bansa tiyak ang pangako ng kaunlaran.

Ang Bicol region ay sagana sa mga likas na kayamanan at ganda ng tanawin ngunit nananatiling isa sa mga pinakamahirap na rehiyon sa bansa. Bukod sa sakunang pangkalikasan, nagiging hadlang din sa pag-unlad ng ekonomiya ng rehiyon ang sira-sirang mga daan at kawalang alternatibong paraan upang maibyahe ang kanilang kalakal. Isa na rin po ang distansiya dahil malayo po ang Bicol. It became isolated. Sa pamamagitan ng PNR South Long Haul, mas lalawak ang oportunidad sa pag-unlad sa Bicol region.

In terms of the environmental impact and sustainability, the rail is considered as one of the most energy-efficient and least carbon intensive transport modes. This is according to the International Agency Report in 2021.

The said report provides that on an average, rail requires 12 times less energy and emits seven to 11 times less greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) per passenger to kilometer travelled than private vehicles and airplanes, making it the most efficient mode of motorized passenger transport.

Aside from shipping, freight rail is the most energy-efficient and least carbon-intensive way to transport goods.

Railway is the only way to go. It is efficient, accessible, safe, and environment-friendly. Our investment now for the development of our railways will live on and benefit the generations after us. The railway system could become the backbone of our economy.

Legislative Agenda For Rails In The 19th Congress

I have filed several legislative measures to support this advocacy.

First is Senate Resolution No. 64, which seeks to inquire on the status of implementation of various government railway projects, with the end in view of crafting measures that shall fast-track their construction and prevent further delay of their completion. This is a housekeeping measure which shall keep this august Body abreast of the latest information about the railway projects. It is imperative that we are informed in order for us to also know how we can further help the administration in terms of implementation and financing.

The first bill that I filed during the opening of this Congress is Senate Bill No. 158 for the formulation and institutionalization of a Comprehensive Infrastructure Development Master Plan. This shall serve as the blueprint for the different departments of the government in the construction, upgrading, and improvement of infrastructure projects all over the country for the next 50 to 100 years. *Kahit po sino ang umupong Pangulo, ito na po ang magsisilbing blueprint para sa infrastructure and transport development. Para po tuloy-tuloy ang ating infra development.*

I also filed Senate Bill No. 165, which shall institutionalize the establishment of agri-food terminals and trading centers in every province in the country. The agri-food terminals will serve as a place where local farmers can sell their produce and goods directly to the wholesalers. We envision that in the future, this shall be part of the economic hubs in every railway station. *Ang panukalang batas na ito ay ating inihain bago pa ang SONA ni Pangulong Marcos kung saan ipinahayag niya ang pagbibigay prayoridad sa pagpapasigla ng agrikultura.*

I also commit my unwavering support to the Department of Transportation's mission to implement the key infrastructure programs of this administration. *Basta't para sa implementasyon ng railway projects at transportasyon, at para sa pangkalahatang kaunlaran, ako po ay handang magsulong at mag-dipensa muli nito sa Senado.*

Conclusion

To conclude, we are now living in a time where the rest of the world is on a race of developing not only the best high-speed rail, but the first fully-electrified bullet train, and the hydrogen-fuel cell hybrid train, while we are still laying the tracks. Nevertheless, I have never doubted our compassion for our people, and our commitment to bring growth and development to the country. I am full of hope that one day the railway system can, indeed, become the backbone of our economy.

At this juncture, the Powerpoint presentation flashed pictures of Senator Ejercito's toy train collection.

On a lighter note, allow me to share my personal project as a reflection of my deep commitment to realize this dream of having a working railway system in the country. *Kahit po nasa bahay ko ay gumawa na ako ng railway system. Naging panaginip ko na po mula noon, kaya sana po ngayon ay maging katotohanan na. Diyan po nakikita natin iyong benepisyo niyan on how we can have the city clear. Iyong mas maluwa ang kalsada dahil nasa railway lahat, at iyong mga tao ay madali ring nakapasok. So, talagang isinabuhay at nandoon na po sa aking bahay ang atin pong railway system at sana po ay ito ay maging isang katotohanan.*

Magtulungan tayo upang madagdagan ang 161 kilometro na gumaganang railway sa bansa. Magsiyasat tayo at ating alamin ang estado ng mga railway projects upang masolusyunan ang backlogs sa implementasyon ng mga ito; at suportahan natin ang programa na nabanggit ni Pangulong Marcos upang maisakatuparan na ang mga plano para sa transportasyon.



The cost to build the railway system will be expensive, no doubt; but the returns to the economy will be enormous. Let us lead our *kababayans* to a future where our railway system is modern, safe, accessible, efficient, and environment-friendly. Let us help them take back the quality of life that they have lost from battling everyday traffic and the lack of means to travel. Let us invest in the country's developing sectors through the immense benefits of a reliable railway system. Let us give peace a chance through equal distribution of opportunities across the country. Let us work on these visions now.

Sa ating pagtutulungan, nakatitiyak akong hindi na madidiskaril pa ang ating mga pangarap ng maginhawang buhay para sa lahat ng mga Pilipino.

REMARK OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Ejercito for his years of championing public transportation in the Senate. Senator Villanueva, for his part, stated that the senators missed the Deputy Majority Leader and thanked the country for bringing him back.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that she filed a sustainable transportation bill with TOYM awardee Atty. Antonio Oposa Jr. over a decade ago and, that since, roughly one-third of the Members have filed identical or similar measures. She stated that her current bill was then referred to the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking. In that regard, she expressed her preparedness to call a hearing if the Committee on Rules refers the current measures to her committee, which she surmised would be the case in terms of sustainable transportation. Furthermore, she stated that one of Senator Ejercito's bills, which was similar to her measure that was passed on Third Reading in the previous Congress—the Safe Pathways Bill—would also be heard by her committee. She stated that she would be happy to move the measure forward because her committee is concerned with sustainability issues. She did, however, clarify that her committee would not encroach on other issues related to the bill, such as project timelines, among others.

She stated that whatever action government takes should benefit both current and future generations. She lauded Senator Ejercito's vision and agreed that trains like those found in Europe and other countries are a better alternative to cars which require owners to replace them every three years. She reiterated her continued support for Senator Ejercito's advocacy for sustainable transportation and welcomed him back to the Senate.

Senator Ejercito thanked Senator Cayetano (P) and stated that his advocacy for an efficient railway system is in line with the senator's crusade to reduce carbon footprint, which aims to reduce the greenhouse effect that the world is currently suffering from. He also stated that the problems currently being reported in international news, such as the heatwave in Europe and flooding in the Middle East and the United States, were addressed in his speech. He contended that efficient mass railway transit could help reduce carbon footprint because one train is equivalent to 15 buses or approximately 250 to 1,000 cars powered by fuel combustion engines.

Senator Cayetano (P) responded that railway systems would partially mitigate the effects of climate change. She disclosed that there had been recent evidence of climate change directly affecting people's health; specifically, air pollution impinging on people's respiratory health in cities due to viruses and bacteria.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR REVILLA

Senator Revilla stated that transportation is the glue of everyday life because so much depend on it—moving people and goods on a daily basis. He averred that the convenience provided by a reliable transport system is amplified the moment it fails, resulting in traffic congestion and cramped conditions inside public transportation vehicles. He joined Senator Ejercito's call for an efficient and dependable railway system, which he saw as critical to the country's growth and progress.

As to the status of the LRT-1 Extension Project stretching from Manila to Cavite, which Senator Revilla deemed slow in development because he was still a governor when it was proposed 20 or 25 years ago, Senator Ejercito stated that the project had gained traction only recently. He confirmed that the project had already reached Parañaque City and hoped that it would be extended to Cavite in the coming years. He also informed the Body of several infrastructure projects in various stages of development, including: 1) the North-South Commuter Line; 2) the Manila Subway System; and 3) the South Long Haul. Furthermore, he stated that items 1 and 2 are both led by Japan, while item 3 is a project led by China.

In terms of short-term solutions, he informed the Body that the Telecommuting Act authored by Senator Villanueva, which advocates a four-day work week, was passed in the Seventeenth Congress. He stated that the arrangement intends to reduce time spent on the road traveling to and from work. He also drew attention to a bill he introduced, the Public Utility Motorcycles Bill, which aims to give legal status to motorcycle taxis and couriers, which flourished during the pandemic and kept the economy afloat. He hoped that the transportation subsector could continue to operate on a provisional basis while the bill is still before the Committee on Public Services.

At this point, he also advocated for the improvement of bicycle lanes in Metro Manila in order to encourage people to consider riding bicycles to work.

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda.

He informed the senators that P3.5 billion had been included in the 2017 or 2018 budget in order that the PNR could buy new train wagons. He added that the PNR had acquired new train sets, which are already in use from Valenzuela to Makati. He also expressed hope that the new train sets would eventually reach the City of Calamba.

He said that the MRT that goes from Valenzuela to Makati is already operational and shortened the travel time to only 37 minutes instead of the one to two-and-a-half hours needed to reach the same destination by car and without using the Skyway. He expressed hope that the MRT line would soon reach Calamba. In the meantime, he said that the commuters could use the PNR trains while waiting for the modern railways system to be operational.

Senator Revilla congratulated Senator Ejercito for his privilege speech which he believed must be acted upon immediately and hoped that it would speed up the construction of the country's MRT lines and railway system through the collaboration of the government and the private sector.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR POE

Preliminarily, Senator Poe commended Senator Ejercito for his privilege speech on the transport sector.

Senator Poe observed that three big-ticket railway projects, namely the Subic-Clark Railway; the PNR South Long-Haul; and the Mindanao Railway still have no funding even though they were initially supposed to be funded by the China Eximbank. She said that since the deal did not push through, its loan applications with a May 31, 2022 deadline were automatically withdrawn. She then asked why the government chose to borrow from the China Eximbank when the bank was supposedly going to charge three percent interest which is considerably higher than the 0.01 percent rate offered by Japan.

Senator Ejercito replied that he would have preferred that the Philippines borrows from a country with a reliable railway system such as Japan, adding that the latter, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has been extending friendlier terms to the Philippine government.

He also informed the Members that, since China had backed out of funding the Philippines' three railway projects through China Eximbank, he filed a resolution for an audit of the old railway projects so that the government could move forward and renegotiate for other funding sources. He expressed hope that Japan would undertake the North-South Commuter Railway and other railways project to ensure interoperability with existing lines. However, he acknowledged that in the last administration, there were projects that were undertaken partly by China and partly by Japan.

Saying that the cancelled projects with China might be a blessing in disguise, Senator Poe said that the President talked about studying the terms further and renegotiating the deal.

Concurring with Senator Ejercito's observation that Japan is a dependable project partner, Senator Poe said that Sumitomo Corporation of Japan could be relied upon to rehabilitate the metro rails. She recalled that the China made-Dalian trains purchased by the Philippine government arrived six years late and were of such substandard quality that they needed to be repaired and rehabilitated. She also wondered why the government was not partnering with Japan for such projects when it has repeatedly proven itself to be reliable.

In response, Senator Ejercito said that China has a bad track record, particularly with the scrapping of the North Rail project. He recalled that in one of his trips with President Duterte in Japan, he learned that while the Japanese do take their time to work on projects, they are certain to complete them.

On whether the Megawide Construction Corporation would undertake the construction of the subway project, Senator Ejercito replied in the affirmative, adding that it was also the firm behind the construction of the Clark International Airport.

Senator Poe noted that the company also built the Cebu International Airport. She believed that the Senate should look into the implementors of the project as it is not just a simple construction of railways but is meant to be a transport system that would bridge the regions in a way that would not unnecessarily burden the taxpayers.

Relative thereto, Senator Poe expressed hope that with the passage of the amendments to the Public Service Act, there would be more options and bidders who want to invest in the railway system in order to mitigate the fiscal burden of acquiring new trains.

In comparing China and Japan, Senator Poe pointed out that the choice should have been very clear considering not only the disparity in the interest rate that would be charged by the two countries, but also the competence, and deliveries of the projects they previously had with the Philippines. She opined that the government ought to focus on those factors before signing another contract that might be disadvantageous to the country.

Senator Ejercito informed the Body that according to the DOTr, China committed \$9 billion worth of projects for ODA but only \$600 million was granted. Senator Poe said that they should not be confident with any deal and believed that the new administration should take advantage of having a fresh start and finish all its major projects by getting assistance from the right countries.

As regards the transport network sector, Senator Poe raised the issue on an existing DOTr order which puts the transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Grab and motorcycles for hire, under the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). She believed that the LTFRB might be going in over its head by taking on an additional function when it could not even offer complete routes or grant more franchises to public utility jeepneys, thus resulting in inadequate public transportation.

Senator Poe also underscored the importance of having an efficient railway network such as those in Singapore and Japan which work seamlessly even though they are operated by different private companies. She then asked if it is possible to have such a system realized through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) as long as the main monitoring group is knowledgeable and is transparent in its transactions.

Relative thereto, she pointed out that even the United States lacks rail transport because of the strong lobby of the automobile industry, such as Ford, Cadillac, Lincoln, Chevrolet; whereas the countries of Europe have several railways because they do not rely on cars.

Senator Ejercito said that he was looking forward to working with Senator Poe in pushing for the improvement of the transportation sector.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Expressing her appreciation to Senator Ejercito for filing Proposed Senate Resolution No. 64 on the status of the government implementation of the railway projects, Senator Hontiveros asked whether there were any progress reports for all the railway projects, including the recent Build, Build, Build China rails.

Replying in the affirmative, Senator Ejercito gave the breakdown of the Overall Progress Rates, as follows:

| Project | Overall Progress | Construction | Procurement | Right of Way | Design | Remarks |
|---|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| North - South Commuter Railway System NSCR, Clark, Manila and Calamba | 37.70% | | | | | |
| Malolos to Clark; Malolos to Tutuban | 55.64% | | | | | |
| Metro Manila Subway Project | 32.30% | 2% | 69.40% | 66.20% | 72.38% | |
| LRT Line I, Cavite Extension | 61.38% | 49% | 99% | 75% | | |
| LRT Line 2 Extension Santolan to Antipolo | 99.76% | | | | | Operational |
| MRT Line 3 | | | | | | Rehabilitation |
| LRT Line 7 - North Avenue to San Jose del Monte | 64.58% | 59.63% | | | | |
| North Avenue (Common Station) | | 68.82% | | | | |
| PNR South Long Haul | | 0% | 54.69% | 13.75% | 47.58% | |
| Mindanao Railway Project Ph 1 - Tagum - Davao - Digos | 14% | 0% | 4% | 50% | 40% | |
| South Long Haul | 0% | | | | | |
| Mindanao Railway | 0% | | | | | |
| Subic - Clark Railway | 26% | 0% | | | | |

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Senator Ejercito said that the construction of South Long-Haul and Mindanao Railway project currently stands at zero percent.

Senator Hontiveros thanked Senator Ejercito for taking the first step to prompt the Executive by presenting the status report of the railway projects. However, she said that she was surprised to learn that there had not been any progress in the construction of some projects.

She then requested for a copy of the data on the initial construction rates of the infrastructure projects in preparation for their participation in future committee hearings on the matter.

Asked for the amount that had already been spent for these projects, Senator Ejercito replied that he did not have the data at the moment which is why he called for an audit in the filed resolution and committed to extract the information from authorities during the hearings.

Agreeing with the view that the envisioned railway system could become the backbone of Philippine economy as railway stations would be designed and developed as economic hubs, Senator Hontiveros asked Senator Ejercito for his thoughts on the proposal of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to adopt the "Balanced Regional Development" concept which advocates the public transport system, especially the railway system, as its skeletal framework.

In response, Senator Ejercito said that this was why he is determined to push for the completion of the country's public transportation system. He pointed out that the country's development is concentrated in Metro Manila, Cebu City, Davao City, and possibly the Cagayan de Oro which has terribly congested the said areas. He posited that the cities can only be decongested by spreading out the development to other provinces and by putting the necessary infrastructure in place. He reiterated Senator Hontiveros' point on railway stations becoming economic hubs with business districts, industrial estates, food terminals, and even housing projects established around them.

He opined that this would be the ideal model for achieving equitable regional development, especially in Mindanao where military solutions have been implemented in futile attempts to solve decades-long problems. He averred that people in the south turn to insurgency and rebellion because they are hungry and lack opportunities for decent livelihood. He expressed sadness that the rate of progress for the Mindanao railway system stood at zero as it is vital to ushering development, employment, and opportunities which would consequently pave the way for lasting peace in the region.

In reference to Senator Ejercito's previous statement that Singapore took a risk in prioritizing infrastructure development on the 70s and 80s, Senator Hontiveros sought details on the risks that had been taken by the city state and the lessons that can be learned from such ventures.

Senator Ejercito narrated having attended a seminar hosted by the Land Transportation Authority of Singapore where he met the Minister of Transport who told him how Singapore, then a third world country, decided to take the plunge and heavily invested in infrastructure development.

Asked why the government decided to engage China Exim Bank for the South Long Haul and Mindanao Railway System despite having a higher interest rate of three percent compared to Japan's offer of 0.01 percent, Senator Ejercito reiterated that he would have preferred to have Japan undertake the projects not only because its railway system and technology is known to be safe, but also because it has been giving the Philippine government very friendly interest rates. He agreed that China Exim Bank's had set high interest rates and also noted that government would have to buy the design, equipment, parts and even rely on the actual construction of the railway from China.

He opined that the past administration probably wanted China to have a piece of the project as well, thus dividing the projects between Japan and China, with the former doing the North-South Commuter line and the Metro Manila

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Subway System, and the latter undertaking the South Long Haul and Mindanao Railway Systems. He added that perhaps, China's non-conformity to the deliverables was a blessing in disguise as the government could then renegotiate with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), or the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and acquire friendlier rates and terms.

Asked how much household income could be saved if an efficient public transport system is in place, Senator Ejercito replied that one cannot put a price on the significant savings in travel time which, in turn, provides a better quality of life for Filipinos.

He said that the North-South Commuter line would cut travel time from Clark to Calamba by 45 minutes while the Metro Manila Subway project would reduce the commuting time from Valenzuela to Bicutan by 40 minutes. He pointed out that the time saved would allow Filipino families to spend more time together, thus contributing to societal development as well.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLAR (M)

At the outset, Senator Villar (M) expressed support for the discussion on the future of the country's railway system wherein the upgrading, rehabilitation, and extension of existing railway networks could be realized, finally easing the burdens of daily commuters. He thanked Senator Ejercito whom he said was a long-time proponent of infrastructure such as the railway system.

He emphasized that undertaking the development of the country's public transportation system requires a whole-of-government approach and pointed out the unprecedented strides in the push for a mass transit system during the Duterte administration. He mentioned projects such as the LRT Line 2 East extension, the MRT Line 3 Rehabilitation and the Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

He also mentioned ongoing projects that include the MRT 7, the North-South Commuter Rail Extension Project, the LRT-1 Cavite Extension Project, the Subic-Clark Railway, and the PNR South Long Haul to Bicol. He added that there are 120 operational train cars in LRT 1, 32 operational train cars in LRT 2, 72 in MRT 3 and 50 in PNR, most of which are brand new.

Further, he explained that most of the projects mentioned and those in the pipeline require a large amount of planning. He added that technical planning takes a long time. The feasibility studies, he said, takes years to finish, let alone the detailed engineering designs. However, he said that the Duterte government was very consistent in aggressively pursuing these projects through the years.

He also noted that the government can opt to avail of untied or tied loans to finance such projects. He pointed out that untied loans are open to any contractor and are subject to higher interest rates while tied loans offer lower rates but limits the government to getting contractors who are from the lending country. He added that numerous factors, including currency fluctuations, had been considered in deciding on the type of loan that would be availed for such projects.

However, he assured the senators that the Duterte administration was dedicated to finding the best possible deal for the country. He emphasized that the discussion on interest rates, which the DOF had extensively researched and looked into, was a very complex thing.

Senator Villar (M) stated that while he would defer to financial experts to comment on the complex financial computations, the work that was put into the projects and pipeline that the Duterte administration created was enormous and numerous. He expressed his gratitude to President Marcos for remaining firm in his statement that he would continue the Build, Build, Build Program that the previous administration had started—a program in which he had been heavily involved and very happy about. He expressed hope that the government could improve and make the railway systems similar to other countries through appropriate government policies and good practices.

He urged the Body to continue to support the infrastructure programs aimed at bringing development, jobs, and new opportunities to the country. He expressed his support for Senator Ejercito's call to improve the Philippine railway system. He emphasized that at the end of the day, the Build, Build, Build Program is never about just building roads, bridges, and infrastructure; it is about ensuring a comfortable life for all, which could be accomplished by making mass transportation a government priority.

Senator Ejercito responded by thanking and commending Senator Villar (M) for his work as then DPWH Secretary. He agreed that the Build, Build, Build Program increased infrastructure spending from a meager 2% to 5.6% during the Duterte administration. He expressed hope that it rise further in order to complete the projects. He also noted Senator (M) Villar's comments and invited him to the upcoming hearings on the status of the railway system projects.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PADILLA

Following Senator Ejercito's speech, Senator Padilla recalled that one of the subjects he studied during his first year in Criminology was traffic. He stated that whenever traffic is bad, the country's economy suffers. He believed that traffic would only improve if there is more mass transportation, which the railway system could help with, because it would make traveling from one place to another easier and faster. He emphasized that the people of Bicol have placed their hopes in the railway system to make travel more convenient.

He also mentioned the ropeway or cable cars above ground as another mode of transportation that could help alleviate traffic congestion, particularly in Metro Manila. He then stated his desire to be associated with Senator Ejercito's speech.

At this juncture, Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda relinquished the Chair to Senate President Zubiri.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

In addition to the manifestation of Senator Padilla, Senate President Zubiri informed the Body that countries in South America, such as Peru and Colombia, use above-ground cable cars for mass transportation because *favelas* are so densely packed.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE LEGARDA

Senator Legarda joined Senator Ejercito in emphasizing the importance of the Philippines having an efficient and safe railway system. She lamented that it is taking so long, despite the fact that the issue has been debated since her first term in Congress in 1998, and is still being discussed during her fourth term as a senator.

Asked by Senator Legarda about the number of kilometers of operational railways and the agency in charge, Senator Ejercito stated that the total operational railway is 161 kilometers, with the PNR directly under the DOTr and the LRT-1, LRT-2, and MRT under their respective bureaus under the DOTr.

Senator Ejercito stated that of the three, the MRT is the main transit system, despite being considered a streetcar in Europe; it is not heavy duty, but it gets the job done. He stated that since Sumitomo Corporation became its maintenance provider, the trains' performance has greatly improved; they now transport between 300,000 and 400,000 passengers per day along EDSA. He estimated that the MRT would come in around fifth place in terms of international standards. On the other hand, he said that LRT-1, which runs along Taft Avenue, has been in operation for longer and continues to perform better, while LRT-2 runs east of Metro Manila to Rizal. He stated that the PNR has purchased new train sets to replace the old ones that were purchased approximately 40 years ago. He stated that Congress appropriated P3.5 billion in 2018 for the purchase of nine new train sets for the PNR which are currently in use. Furthermore, he stated that the brand new and clean trains were built by an Indonesian

company. He described how he had the opportunity to ride the train from Valenzuela to Makati, which took him 37 minutes.

Senator Legarda pointed out that the 161 kilometers of tracks would only be enough to cover Metro Manila. She then inquired whether or not there were train systems operating in the Visayas and in Mindanao. Senator Ejercito stated that no other trains are operating in other parts of the country. In terms of the length of railway envisioned in the speech, he informed the Body that the DOTr is aiming for 1,200 kilometers of railway, which include the North-South Commuter Line that is currently under construction, the Metro Manila Subway System, the South Long Haul to Bicol, and the Mindanao Railway System.

As regards the cost of each project, he enumerated the following:

- Of the P149 billion for the North-South Commuter Line (Tutuban to Malolos), P13 billion has already been allotted for the project;
- P283 billion for the Malolos to Clark Line;
- Of the P344 billion budget for the Solis to Calamba Line, P1.4 billion has been allotted for the project;
- Of the initial P175.32 billion for the South Long Haul Line (Manila to Bicol), P3.2 billion has been allotted for the project under 2018 GAA; and
- Of the P81.7 billion total cost for Phase 1 of the Mindanao Railway System Project (Tagum-Davao-Digos), P5.782 billion and P2.9 billion has been allotted for the project under the 2018 and 2019 GAA, respectively.

He stated that the total railway cost to be funded by the GAA would be nearly P2 trillion, which would be funded in tranches over five to 10 years.

Senator Legarda recalled that Congress has been discussing the railways since she first became a senator in the 1990s, and that it is still discussed in 2022. Senator Ejercito stated that the railways would still be discussed even after Senator Legarda's fourth term.

Senator Legarda thanked Senator Ejercito for bringing the matter to the Body's immediate attention. She then expressed her support for the Senate's intervention and hoped that the current DOTr leadership would seriously consider projects for efficient mass transportation, as sustainable transportation is an urgent need of the people. She then congratulated Senator Ejercito for his speech.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Recognizing the previous administration, Senate President Zubiri stated that the Duterte administration had spearheaded many projects that are still ongoing today.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva expressed his support and desire to be associated with Senator Ejercito's speech in the implementation and promotion of mass transportation, and emphasized the significance of the Telecommuting Act or the Work from Home Law, which was passed in 2018.

Citing the Global Competitiveness Report, Senator Villanueva informed the Body that the Philippines received a score of 2.4 out of seven, ranking 100th out of 140 countries in 2018; and 2.4 out of seven, ranked 88th out of 141 countries in 2019. He stated that he was glad Senator Ejercito stood to deliver his speech because there is

always room for improvement and investment in the transportation system so that people can get around. He added that just mentioning the importance of the projects and the jobs they would create would boost the country's employment rate.

He alluded to the NEDA's statement that estimated government investments could result in 2.5 million jobs by 2022. He stated that it has the potential to create 620,000 jobs that are either directly or indirectly related to the implementation of the government's flagship projects.

He stated that the railways system receives 42.46%, or P23.119 billion, of the DOTr-Office of the Secretary's P54.551 billion budget. However, he said that based on the DBM's Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances, only 15.6% of the budget was disbursed as of March 31, 2022. He said that there is a need to look into the matter because other countries, such as Singapore, have railway systems that are so effective and efficient that the Filipino can only look on with envy.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEES

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Ejercito as well as the interpellations and manifestations thereon primarily to the Committee on Public Services and to the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking as the secondary committee.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR PADILLA

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Padilla delivered the following speech on the French arbitration court ruling that the Malaysian government should pay US\$14.92 billion to the descendants of the last Sulu sultan:

A'oodhu Billahi min ash-Shaytaan-ir-rajeem. Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamin. Bismillahi Wassalatu Wassalamu 'Ala Rasulillah.

Ako po ay bumabati sa inyo ng Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Ang akin pong talumpati sa haponng ito ay ukol sa usaping sumasaklaw sa ating kasaysayan, pagka-Pilipino, at sa tagumpay na nakamit ng mga tagapagmana o inapo ng sultanato o Sultanate of Sulu sa nakaraang desisyon ng French Arbitration Court. Halos isang dekada na nang huling marinig ang usapin ukol sa North Borneo sa bulwagang ito. Tatawagin ko muna itong North Borneo. Pero noon, ang tawag rito ay Sabah. Noong dumating ang Britanya sa lugar na iyan, naging North Borneo. At noong itinatag po ang Federation ng Malaysia, ibinalik po ito sa Sabah. Pero hayaan po ninyo akong tawagin siyang North Borneo sa ngayon.

Hindi natin maitatanggi: sensitibo ang paksa. Ngunit tulad ng lahat ng usapin na may malalim at mabigat na implikasyon sa ating Inang Bayan, hindi natin ito maaaring ipagsawalang bahala; hindi tayo maaaring manahimik na lamang.

Hindi layon ng talumpating ito na bigyang kasagutan ang lahat ng may kinalaman sa usapin sa alitan sa North Borneo. Sa halip, sisikapin nating ipakita ang konteksto at mga kaganapan na bubuhay sa diskursong ito:

Una, sa pagsasalaysay ng historikal na naratibo tungkol sa North Borneo;

Ikalawa, paglalata ng naging hantungan ng desisyon ng arbitrasyon sa Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Madrid at maging ng French Arbitration Court sa walong taong legal na pakikipagtunggali ng mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato sa North Borneo;

At pangatlo, pagsuri sa tugon ng gobyerno sa resulta ng arbitrasyon sa North Borneo sa isang banda, at sa kabila naman, ang masigasig na pagsusog nito sa kasong arbitral sa usapin ng West Philippine Sea.

Bilang pambuod, nais nating himayin ang mga aksyong maaring ihatag sa Senado patungkol sa usaping nabanggit. Ang isyung ito ay masalimuot dahil magkakaugnay ang alitan mula sa batayan ng pagmamay-ari,

g.p.

maging ng pagkakakilanlan ng karapat-dapat na tagapagmana ng Sultanato, at gayundin ang pagsasalin ng mga dokumento mula sa panahon na hindi pa isinisilang ang sinuman sa atin na narito ngayon.

Tayo po ay magbabalik-tanaw sa kasaysayan.

Noong 1658, ipinagkaloob ng Sultan ng Brunei ang parte ng North Borneo sa Sultan ng Sulu bilang pasasalamat sa tulong ng huli sa pagsugpo sa isang rebelyon sa Brunei.

Noong Enero 22, 1878, pumasok ang Sultan ng Sulu na si Sultan Jamal Al Alam sa isang Deed of Lease kasama sina Gustavus Baron de Overbeck, isang Austrian, at Alfred Dent ng Inglatera. Itinatag nila ang British North Borneo Company o BNBC, isang pribadong kompanya na pinagkalooban ng charter o kapangyarihan ng gobyerno ng Britanya.

Niliwanag rin ng Minister ng Foreign Affairs ng Britanya na si Earl Granville sa pamamagitan ng 1885 Madrid Protocol na walang soberanya ang BNBC sa North Borneo. Ayon kay Granville, the BNBC charter also “recognizes the grants of territory and powers of government made and delegated by the Sultans in whom the sovereignty remains vested.”

Kasunod nito, noong 1903, nagkaroon ng Confirmatory Deed sa pagitan ng Sultan at BNBC para sa karagdagang taunang upa mula US\$ 5,000 hanggang US\$ 5,300.

Naitala ang kauna-unahang opisyal na aksyon ng bansa noong 1950 nang ihain sa Kongreso ang Concurrent Resolution No. 42 na pinagtibay noong ika- 28 ng Abril, 1950. Nakasaad dito na ang North Borneo ay pagmamay-ari ng mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato. At kaugnay nito, binibigyan ng kapangyarihan ang Presidente na makipagnegosasyon para sa panunumbalik ng sovereign jurisdiction.

Taong 1963 nang opisyal na nagbigay ng abiso ang Pilipinas na hindi ito papayag na mapabilang ang North Borneo o Sabah sa itinatag na Federal Republic of Malaysia. Nagkasundo noon ang mga pinuno ng Malaysia, Pilipinas, at Indonesia na ayusin ang isyu sa pamamagitan ng internasyonal na hukuman. Gayunman, patuloy ang pagtanggap ng Malaysia sa arbitrasyon.

Sa kabila nito, sa ilalim ng pamunuan ng dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos, ipinagtibay ng Republic Act No. 5446 noong 1968. Isinasaad nito na ang North Borneo na ngayon ay Sabah ay kinikilalang teritoryo ng Pilipinas.

Ang hindi pagkakaunawaan sa Sabah ay nag-uugat sa iisang tanong: sa pamamagitan ng dokumentong nilagdaan ng Sultan ng Sulu noong 1878, ibinenta ba o ipinaupa lamang ang Sabah sa mga Briton na dating sumakop sa Malaysia? Ano ba ang saklaw ng “upa” sa usapin ng Sabah?

Malinaw ang sinundan ng salaysay. Sa loob ng isang daan at tatlumpu’t limang taon, 135 years, alinsunod sa kasunduan noong 1878, tuluy-tuloy ang natatanggap na bayad-upa ng mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato— taunang bayad galing sa United Kingdom mula 1878 hanggang 1962 at sa gobyerno ng Malaysia naman, mula 1963 hanggang 2013.

Makailang ulit ring tinuran ang salitang “pajak,” na nangangahulugang “pag-upa” sa salitang Malay. Ang paulit-ulit na pagtukoy sa upa ay nagpapakita na ang pagmamay-ari sa Sabah ay nasa Sultan ng Sulu pa rin.

Gayunman, simula 2013, itinigil ng Malaysia ang taunang bayad-upa pagkatapos ng sigalot sa Lahad Datu. Ito ang nag-udyok sa paghahain ng Sulu royal family ng reklamo sa internasyonal na tribunal.

Taong 2018 nang ihain ng mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato ang opisyal na reklamo laban sa pamahalaan ng Malaysia sa pamamagitan ng arbitrasyon sa Espanya. Sa kabila ng tuluy-tuloy na paglilitis, hindi nagpaabot ng representasyon ang pamahalaan ng Malaysia, liban lamang sa tatlong pagkakataon. Patuloy ang pangbabalewala ng gobyerno ng Malaysia sa arbitrasyon.

Nakadidismaya po na sa panig natin ay pareho rin ang tugon ng pamahalaan. Hindi ba napakalaking kapabayaan na hinahayaan nating umasa na lamang ang Sultanato sa tulong ng pribadong organisasyon para tustusan ang lehitimong laban?

Sa kabila ng pikit-matang tugon ng gobyerno, napanalunan ng claimants ang kasong isinampa sa Madrid High Court noong Mayo 2020. Pinagtibay rin ng French Arbitration Court ang desisyon at, kaakibat nito, inatasan ang Malaysia na magbayad ng may kabuuhan US\$14.9 billion sa mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato.

Ano ba ang buod ng desisyon ng Arbitral Tribunal at implikasyon nito? Una, ang 1878 Agreement ay isang international private lease agreement of commercial nature. Pangalawa, nilabag ng Malaysian Government ang 1878 Agreement sa hindi nito pagbabayad ng upa. Pangatlo, tinatapos na ang kasunduan simula noong ika-1 ng Enero, 2013. Sa desisyong ito, bukod sa iba pa, pinagbabayad rin ang Malaysia ng halagang US\$ 14.92 billion para sa pinaupahang teritoryo.

Mahalaga ang desisyon ng Arbitral Tribunal. Binibigyan po nito ng internasyonal na legal na pagkilala ang tunay na layunin ng mga partidong lumagda sa kasunduan sa Sabah mahigit isang siglo na ang nakaraan.

Bilang mga Pilipino, karapat-dapat na tulungan ng buong kapangyarihan ng ating pamahalaan ang mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato ng Sulu katulad ng pagtulong nito sa kahit sinong mamamayan sa loob at labas ng bansa. Ang pagtulong ng pamahalaan sa kanyang mamamayan ay mandato ng Estado. Hindi ito dapat pagmulan ng anumang tensyon sa relasyon ng Pilipinas at Malaysia.

Isipin po natin, kung malaki ang kapakinabangan ng bansa mula sa desisyong ito—kabilang na ang buwis na bubuhos mula sa parangal sa mga claimants—bakit po tila napakatahimik natin? Bakit po parang walang tumutulong sa kanila?

Tayo po ay nasa gitna pa rin ng pandemya. Patuloy ang pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilihan. Lumulobo ang trilyong halagang utang ng bansa. Lahat ng mapagkukunan ng halagang pangtustos sa serbisyo publiko ay malaking ambag para sa bawat Pilipino.

Kung atin pong babalikan, sariwa pa sa atin ang makasaysayang desisyon ng Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration noong 2016 ukol sa West Philippine Sea. Binuhusan ng pansin at panahon ang usaping ito na nagbunga ng monumental na desisyon para sa kapakinabangan ng bansa. Kung kinaya nating maglunsad ng makasaysayang pagkilos sa katulad na national agenda, bakit tila po salat na salat sa pansin ang Sabah?

Sa nagdaang State of the Nation Address ng ating pinakamamahal na Pangulong Bongbong Marcos, kaniyang tinuran, “I will not preside over any process that will abandon even one square inch of the territory of the Republic of the Philippines to any foreign power.”

Hangad po natin na ang makabuluhang pahayag ng ating Pangulo ng Republika ay sumasaklaw sa usapin sa Sabah.

Isapuso at isip po natin bilang Pilipino at iisang bansa, isang tagumpay ang panalo sa internasyunal na hukuman ng mga tagapagmana ng Sultanato para sa kanilang karapatan sa Sabah.

Bilang pagtatapos, hayaan po ninyo ako uling ibahagi ang pahayag ng ating pinakamamahal na Pang. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. noong 2013 bilang isang mambabatas: “We have historical claim over Sabah and that is a fact. The Sultan of Sulu and his people are Filipino citizens and, by virtue of that fact, they deserve protection from the government of the Philippines.”

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR POE

At the outset, Senator Poe commended Senator Padilla for delivering a very passionate and riveting privilege speech. She also admitted that even as a lawmaker, she had not really paid much attention to the issue. She noted that Senator Padilla’s impassioned speech was backed up with facts and chronology such that she actually felt convinced that the Philippines has basis to assert its sovereignty regarding the issue.

Asked by Senator Poe if parties to the lease agreement consist of a private individual who is a Filipino citizen and the Malaysian government, Senator Padilla said that the Deed of Lease was entered into by a Briton, an Austrian, and a sultan from the Sultanate of Sulu, who gave permission to the two foreigners.

On why the sultanate entered into a lease agreement with the two foreigners rather than with the Malaysian government, Senator Padilla noted that in 1878, Malaysia was still a British colony while North Borneo with a land area of 73,000 square kilometers, belongs to the Sultanate of Sulu. He added that during this period, Gustav Baron von Overbeck from Austria, and Alfred Dent of England were powerful and influential personalities in Europe.

Asked if Malaysia encroaches on North Borneo, similar to the nine-dash line on the West Philippine Sea, Senator Padilla replied in the affirmative. Based on the map, he noted that Malaysia is in the middle and North Borneo is near Tawi-Tawi, the Philippines' farthest, southernmost province.

As to when the annual lease payment ceased, Senator Padilla said that Malaysia stopped paying in 2013, after the Lahad Datu standoff. He said that from 1878 to 1962, the British North Borneo Company had been paying US\$5,000 lease annually, which was continued by Malaysia from 1963 to 2013, worth P70,000 in Malaysian money.

To the supposition that the French arbitration court issued an award of US\$14.9 billion because they find the lease payment inequitable, Senator Padilla replied in the affirmative. He noted that the arbitral decision exhibited the progress achieved by North Borneo being one of the producers of oil and other natural resources. Moreover, he said that based on the computation, the unpaid lease would reach US\$15 billion dollars from 2013 to 2044.

Inquired if a representative was sent by Malaysia to attend hearings since the French arbitration court is an independent court, Senator Padilla stated that initially, the heads of state of Malaysia and the Philippines have agreed to resolve the issue with North Borneo but after attending the hearing three times, the Malaysian representatives never showed up despite notices. He said that the narratives and conversation could be found in the decision of the French court.

Noting the international tribunal court's resounding decision favoring the Philippines' claim over the West Philippine Sea, Senator Poe asked what would be the next step following the decision of the French arbitration court and another pending judgment from the Spanish High Court of Justice in Madrid. Senator Padilla replied that the Sultanate of Sulu is seeking government support to demand compensation from Malaysia amounting to US\$14.92 billion, or P829 billion in Philippine currency.

If the P829 billion would be taxed at 40% optional deduction (P331 billion), he said that the taxable income from the compensation would be P497.4 billion. Based on income tax rate, an amount over P8 million entails an income tax of P2.4 million and 35% of the excess over P8 million; hence, the government could gain P174 billion from the award plus 10% attorney's fees, or P82.9 billion.

Furthermore, for the attorney's fees, he noted that since it is a business transaction, the P33 billion optional deduction could be subtracted from P82.9 billion, or a taxable income of P49.74 billion. He noted that the taxable income for the amount in excess of P8 million is P2.4 million plus 35% of the excess, or an estimated tax collection of P17.4 billion, which is good news to the Committee on Finance as it could match the Department of Health's budget which is 183 billion.

For her part, Senator Poe surmised that the reason why the lease payment was not settled by Malaysia was because paying the same would be tantamount to admitting that the disputed land is really not part of their territory.

Asked on what should be done to settle the dispute, Senator Padilla said that the heirs of the Sultanate of Sulu are merely seeking help to claim proprietary rights on North Borneo; since the territory is already handed over to the government, it is now up to the Philippine Republic whether or not they would continue to push its claim on North Borneo.

While proprietary claims could be fixed in legal terms, Senator Poe reiterated that the discussion regarding the payment of lease could not be separated from the ownership and sovereignty of North Borneo because if Malaysia would pay lease to the sultanate, there follows a presumption that the territory is not theirs.

In conclusion, she noted that Senator Padilla's very interesting privilege speech has not only awakened the country's interest on North Borneo, but has likewise helped fellow Filipinos—the heirs of the sultanate, to pursue legitimate right over the said territory, thereby demonstrating that the Philippines, as a nation, would not tolerate oppression against any of its people.

Senate President Zubiri remarked that one complication brought about by the arbitral ruling in Europe was the garnishment of property, which is a hot topic in the Malaysian parliament. He underscored that the Philippine government must handle the matter carefully because Malaysia is an ally, and a member of the ASEAN. Thereafter, he lauded Senator Padilla for sharing the French arbitral ruling about North Borneo and the Sultanate of Sulu to everyone.

As an aside, Senator Padilla pointed out that prior to Spanish colonization, the Philippines is a rich country and has a progressive civilization—similar to how Dr. Jose Rizal demonstrated it in his writings. He also stressed that he stands in solidarity with the ASEAN; in fact, he wore a Malay batik for the day's session because it was ASEAN's 55th anniversary.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

At the outset, Senator Pimentel commended Senator Padilla for presenting a very sensitive and complicated topic that demanded a great deal of research, thereby making his narrative clearer and understandable.

Saying that there are experts who could be consulted to verify if the meaning of "*padyak*" or "*padyakan*" as recorded in the 1878 agreement meant lease or sale, Senator Pimentel mused what were those assigned or turned over by the Sultanate of Sulu to the Republic of the Philippines from 1950s to 1960s.

Senator Padilla lamented that the Sultanate of Sulu underwent a very long struggle regarding the North Borneo dispute—from the American colonization, the constitution of Commonwealth government, and the declaration of Philippine Independence in 1946. He said that it was only in 1950, when Congress filed a claim that North Borneo belongs to the heirs of the sultan of Sulu, that the dispute took steps, followed by Pres. Diosdado Macapagal's filing of Philippine claim in North Borneo in 1961.

He stated that the lingering battle of the Sultanate of Sulu over its claim to Sabah already existed from the time of the Americans, through the Commonwealth era, and until the United States declared the Philippines' Independence in 1946, and that it was not until 1950 that Congress took a step in recognizing and strengthening the Sulu Sultanate's claim on their rightful ownership through the adoption of Concurrent Senate Resolution No. 42. He stated that former Presidents Diosdado Macapagal and Ferdinand Marcos Sr. made similar efforts, but the issue persisted and is still being discussed even after ASEAN was established. As a result, he stated that while the Sultanate maintains its claim to Sabah, they need the support of the Republic of the Philippines, with the territory recognized as part of the country as well. Senator Pimentel averred that if the Republic recognizes the Sultanate of Sulu's claim to the territory, it must take action.

Senator Padilla reiterated that the Philippines has long claimed Sabah, citing former Presidents such as former President Marcos Sr., who encouraged Malaysia and the Philippines to resolve their territorial dispute for the sake of a better ASEAN, and former President Ramos who even suggested to then-Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad to simply pay their country's dues to the Sultanate of Sulu to finally resolve the issue. He expressed regret, however, that the issue was never resolved, particularly with regard to the country's claim on the territory of Sabah, which is why the Sultanate of Sulu decided to drop its territorial claim while elevating its commercial claim on Sabah to a French arbitration court.

Senator Pimentel thanked Senator Padilla for enlightening the Body on Sabah's history and current issues. He disclosed that his father, former Senator Nene Pimentel, also believed that Sabah is part of the Philippines and shared his belief with the members of the PDP-Laban, the party he founded. He acknowledged Senator Padilla's legal basis for the Republic of the Philippines' claim to Sabah as assigned by the Sultanate of Sulu. He averred

that even Malaysia would acknowledge that the Sultanate of Sulu is involved in the Sabah issue, as the latter is a party to an agreement with Mr. Overbeck and Mr. Dent. He stated that he understood Senator Padilla's speech to be a call for the Republic of the Philippines, through the administration, to support the Sultanate of Sulu in their fight for their claims, particularly their commercial claim on Sabah, which amounts to US\$15 billion based on the French arbitration court's ruling on the case, which the Sultanate of Sulu worked on by themselves.

He also noted that Senator Padilla's presentation of two quotations from the President of the Republic of the Philippines, one from the former's SONA in which he stated that he will not surrender even a square inch of Philippine territory, and another from a 2013 speech in which he stated that the country has the right to claim Sabah. He stated that the President controls the Executive branch, including the DFA, and asked Senator Padilla what the administration, through the DFA, could do to assist the Sultanate of Sulu.

Senator Padilla responded by saying that the Sultanate of Sulu hopes to receive equal support from the Republic, just as it supports the arbitral ruling on the West Philippine Sea. While the two issues are distinct in that one is territorial and the other is proprietary, he believes that both require the support of the Republic because they involve Filipino interest. However, he expressed regret that, while surveys show that 82% of Filipinos support the West Philippine Sea issue, few are aware about the ongoing Sabah dispute. Even worse, he said, is that instead of support, the Sultanate of Sulu is receiving negative feedback from their fellow Filipinos, who believe that they are only causing trouble.

Senator Pimentel suggested that once the privilege speech of Senator Padilla is referred to the appropriate committee, the Body invite the DFA to a committee hearing to listen to and discuss the issue with the Sultanate of Sulu, and to ask their commitment to assist the Sultanate of Sulu in their battle over their claims on Sabah. For example, he stated that the DFA could look at the possibility of utilizing the budget under the Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Fund, pointing out that the Sultanate of Sulu is a national pursuing an arbitration case. He stated that the ATN Fund is typically used to assist Filipinos who are detained abroad and require legal representation, but surmised that it could also be applied to the situation of the Sulu Sultanate, where a case in an arbitration court is involved, and considering that the government has accepted the rights to Sabah as assigned by the Sultanate of Sulu in the 1960s. Senator Padilla believed that it is the government's mandate to extend help to all Filipinos both inside and outside the country.

Senator Pimentel went on to say that Senator Padilla's privilege speech opened up a new perspective on Philippine territory, particularly its extent. In that regard, he stated that, assuming Sabah is part of Philippine territory, there is a need to improve or amend the technical description of the baselines that determine the country's boundaries under current law.

Senator Padilla stated that territorial disputes involving the country are contentious and sensitive issues that require in-depth discussion and should be addressed by the Republic itself. Meanwhile, he hoped that the government could assist the Sultanate of Sulu in collecting the money owed to them from the Malaysian government.

Senator Pimentel believed that in the dispute between the Republic of the Philippines and the Federation of Malaysia involving Sabah, as responsible members of the United Nations, both countries should only use methods recognized by the U.N. for settling disputes between sovereign nations. To finally put an end to the dispute, he hoped that both countries would agree to refer it to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which has jurisdiction over territorial disputes, for final resolution.

He stated that during the hearing, the Body could ask the DFA if the government is confident in challenging Malaysia to agree to submit the issue to an international court and settle it amicably. As an aside, he stated that he just received information that the OSG is also looking into the implications of the French arbitral ruling. He suggested that they be invited as well when the hearing on the issue begins. Noting that the matter is sensitive, he surmised that the Body might be in executive session during some parts of the hearing.

He concluded his interpellation by thanking Senator Padilla for his time and congratulating him on bringing the matter to the Body's attention, stating that the topic has already been recorded and is part of the *Journal of Senate*.

At this point, Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Pimentel for his contributions to the discussion, the latter being a former chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Relations. He agreed with Senator Pimentel that territorial disputes involving the country are sensitive issues, and thus the Body may choose to discuss some of them in an executive session.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Concerning Filipinos who live or work in Sabah, Senator Hontiveros expressed concern that they would develop feelings of being second-class citizens in Malaysia or would doubt whether they even come under the jurisdiction of the Philippine government. She also wondered whether the Philippine government is even aware of their existence because they live so far away from the country. She then recalled how the Eighteenth Congress was able to pass the Foundling Law, which ensures that foundlings have the same rights as Filipino citizens. She stated that advocates for stateless persons see a parallel between the two, and that Filipinos living in Sabah are gradually becoming stateless.

While expressing confidence that Senator Padilla was aware of the situation, she felt it was necessary to bring it to the attention of the Body in the hopes that it would be resolved as soon as possible. She then asked if Senator Padilla has a plan in place to address the growing number of stateless persons in Sabah, so that Filipinos living in the region could receive aid and support from the Philippine government given that the territorial issue has yet to be resolved.

Senator Padilla responded by stating that Sabah is home to between 800,000 to one million Filipinos. He also stated that the Sabah Crisis in 2013 resulted in mass deportation leading to statelessness. He remained optimistic, however, because the incident later resulted to an arbitral ruling in favor of the Sultan of Sulu. He expressed confidence that the arbitral ruling will lead to a new round of negotiations and that the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu would act in the best interests of the Filipinos living in Sabah because Tausug blood flows in their veins. He stated that because the ruling involved US\$15 billion, it indicates a bright future for fellow Filipinos living in the region.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE LEGARDA

Senator Legarda expressed solidarity with Senator Padilla's cause of preserving territorial integrity and sovereignty, a concern shared by the Kiram family. She congratulated Senator Padilla on his comprehensive speech, which brought to the attention of the Body a long-standing issue that has garnered national attention long before any Member present has served a term in the Senate.

She recalled that in 2013, as chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Relations, she introduced Sultan Jamalul Kiram III to the late former President Aquino III so that the two could talk in order to end the bloodshed and standoff in Sabah.

Assuming that Filipinos in Sabah have not been granted Malaysian citizenship with the right to vote, a social pension, and health care, Senator Legarda inquired about the benefits they have been enjoying while living in a region where two countries are at odds.

Replying to Senator Legarda, Senator Padilla described the Filipinos in Sabah as interconnected through kinship. He stated that residents in territories from Sulu to Tawi-Tawi, up to Sabah in North Borneo, are blood relatives. He added that barter has long been the mode of trade in the area, and that because Sabah is so close to the Philippines, most residents from Philippine territories near Sabah buy fresh produce from there. He also stated that Filipinos living in Sabah do not identify themselves as Malaysians because they are proud of their Filipino heritage, and that they believe Sabah belongs to the Sultanate of Sulu.

He likewise confirmed Senator Legarda's account that the Sultan of Sulu wanted to speak with former President Aquino III about the issue. He lamented, however, due to unfortunate circumstances, he was unable to personally deliver the missive to then President Aquino III. He also stated that the Sultan holds Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda in high regard for her concern for the cultural minorities and Muslim Filipinos.

In response to the question on what social or socio-economic benefits Filipinos in Malaysia can enjoy without acquiring Malaysian citizenship, Senator Padilla stated that prior to the 2013 Sabah Crisis, Filipinos in the area had no problems. Furthermore, he stated that whatever hospital benefits Malaysians had at that time, Filipinos would undoubtedly have. He added that it was only recently that nationality became an issue for Filipinos living in Sabah, and as such, the barter trade and lower commodity prices became suddenly inaccessible to people in the Sulu Sultanate.

As to what strategic action he believed the Philippine government, including the Legislative branch, should take so that his privilege speech will have a positive impact on the issue, Senator Padilla responded that the Philippine government should make its position known. He also stated that it pains him to hear reports that the issue is a private matter, and that the Sultan had already passed away without seeing any resolution to the problem.

He believed that, while the issue did not have to be a territorial one, the ruling should provide impetus for the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs to begin reaching out to the Malaysian government so that a formal dialogue could take place, because Malaysian representatives were only present for three hearings during the entire time that the Sabah case was heard by the arbitration court. He believed that with the blessing of the Sultanate of Sulu, the new round of talks will undoubtedly benefit Filipinos in Sabah.

Senator Legarda asked if Senator Padilla is amenable, with the assistance of her office, to obtain the position of the ASEAN Desk in the DFA on the matter. She stated that the request could include the following items: 1) an assessment of the senators' privilege speech; 2) the course of action taken by the DFA ASEAN Desk in response to the concern; and 3) the forms of assistance that the DFA ASEAN Desk could provide to the Senate in order for the issue discussed in the privilege speech to be properly addressed. She stated that her office would be glad to support Senator Padilla in his cause.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR REVILLA

Senator Revilla congratulated Senator Padilla for speaking up on behalf of the Filipinos in Sabah, saying the latter's actions demonstrated that his heart was in the right place and that, as a nationalist, he was on the right track. He also stated that the matter may face an uphill battle in the committee, but that he was confident that the issues would be resolved in due time.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Ejercito, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Padilla to the Committee on Rules.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Ejercito, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

It was 6:39 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

ATTY. RENATO N. BANTUG JR.

Secretary of the Senate

Approved on August 15, 2022