



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

S e n a t e

Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 31

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

**FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 31
Tuesday, November 6, 2007

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:10 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Manny Villar, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile led the prayer, to wit:

Heavenly Father
We pray for your presence
As we invite You to enter our hearts
and our lives.
We crave for the energy to do
Your work.

May we plant the seeds of joy
In arid fields of despair
So that in darkness, we reflect Your light.

In loneliness, send us kindness.
In others' despair, give us the vision
to share hope.
Obligate us to deal fairly with others.
Instill in us the resolve to resist war and
other forms of senseless destruction.

Make each of our voices be heard.
While keeping us unified in adversity,
Give us the strength to stand together
in bad weather,
And remind us always to pray for those
who have perished in the storm.

But most of all, we ask of You
To look upon Your servants kindly.
Despite our imperfections, we affirm the
seed of Your creation
To do good, to attain purity, and to live in
kindness and love.

These we ask through Your Wisdom,
Amen.

ROLL CALL

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

Aquino III, B. S. C.	Honasan, G. B.
Arroyo, J. P.	Lacson, P. M.
Cayetano, A. P. C. S.	Lapid, M. L. M
Cayetano, C. P. S.	Legarda, L.
Ejercito Estrada, J.	Madrigal, M. A.
Enrile, J. P.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Roxas, M.
Gordon, R. J.	Villar, M.

With 16 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Biazon and Zubiri arrived after the roll call.

Senator Angara, who was on official mission, arrived after the roll call.

Senator Pangilinan was on official mission.

Senators Defensor Santiago and Pimentel were on official mission abroad.

Senator Trillanes was unable to attend the session.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 30 and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

h *to*

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1795, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING TO TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P2,000) THE MONTHLY PERSONNEL ECONOMIC RELIEF ALLOWANCE (PERA) GRANTED TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

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

Senate Bill No. 1796, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN LAND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM, CREATING THE LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1797, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, UPHOLDING THEIR RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION, ESTABLISHING AN INCENTIVES AND REWARDS SYSTEM FOR DESERVING ENTITIES, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations

Senate Bill No. 1798, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING MT. GUITING-GUITING NATURAL PARK LOCATED IN SIBUYAN ISLAND, PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, AS A NATURAL PARK AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS AS BUFFER ZONES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES PURSUANT TO REPUBLIC ACT 7586

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1799, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, MARKETING AND ADMINISTRATION OF MORINGA OLEIFERA LAMK, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS MALUNGGAY, MANDATING THE CREATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; Trade and Commerce; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1800, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE FREE ADMINISTRATION OF VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION AMONGST INFANTS AND FILIPINO CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF SEVEN (7), PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1801, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A TEN-YEAR LUNETTA PARK GREEN MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1802, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING SOUND WASTE MANAGEMENT BY REQUIRING ALL DEPARTMENT STORES, MALLS, AND COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO UTILIZE REUSABLE ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS AND PROVIDE THEM FREE OF CHARGE TO CUSTOMERS AND PATRONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Trade and Commerce; and Environment and Natural Resources

Senate Bill No. 1803, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE CASH AND NON-MONETARY BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES OF WINNING FILIPINO OLYMPIAN/S, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9064, AN ACT GRANTING CASH AND OTHER NON-MONETARY BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO NATIONAL ATHLETES, COACHES AND TRAINERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Games, Amusement and Sports; Ways and Means; and Finance

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 175, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING ROSALIE ELLASUS FOR PLACING THE PHILIPPINES IN THE FOREFRONT IN THE BIOTECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT BY WINNING

THE KLECKNER TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT AWARD IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 176, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE WINNERS OF THE 2007 TEN OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN THE NATION'S SERVICE (TOWNS) FOR THEIR UNWAVERING DEVOTION AND LOVE OF COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 177, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE FOR THE RETURN TO THE PHILIPPINES OF THE BALANGIGA BELLS WHICH WERE TAKEN BY THE US TROOPS FROM THE TOWN OF BALANGIGA, PROVINCE OF SAMAR IN 1901

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 178, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE RECENT LANDFILL CONTROVERSY INVOLVING THE MUNICIPALITY OF RODRIGUEZ, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, WHICH THREATENED TO CAUSE GARBAGE CRISIS IN METRO MANILA

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; and Local Government

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 179, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8182, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1996," LOOKING INTO THE FISCAL IMPLICATIONS OF TIED-LOANS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH ADMINISTRATION OF PAST AND PRESENT OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE HAVE PROMOTED SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

To the Committees on Economic Affairs; and Finance

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 180, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND COMMERCE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINGENCY PLAN TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF FURTHER INCREASES IN THE COST OF PETROLEUM IN THE WORLD MARKET, ON PRICES OF BASIC GOODS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator MAR Roxas

To the Committees on Trade and Commerce; and Energy

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 181, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE MATH WIZARDS FOR

WINNING IN THE 1ST WIZARDS MATHEMATICS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION (WIZMIC) 2007 HELD IN LUCKNOW, INDIA

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 182, entitled

RESOLUTION CREATING AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Introduced by Senator Gregorio B. Honasan II

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 183, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING DR. BALDOMERO M. OLIVERA, HARVARD FOUNDATION 2007 SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR, IN RECOGNITION OF HIS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Introduced by Senator Gordon

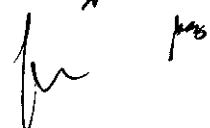
To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 184, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE ALL-FILIPINO TEAM SINAG FOR THEIR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE IN FINISHING THE 3,000 KILOMETER RACE ALONG 40 OTHER ENTRIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN THE 2007 WORLD SOLAR CAR CHALLENGE HELD ON OCTOBER 21-28, 2007 IN ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

To the Committee on Rules



PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 175

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 175, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING ROSALIE ELLASUS FOR PLACING THE PHILIPPINES IN THE FOREFRONT IN THE BIOTECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT BY WINNING THE KLECKNER TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT AWARD IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 175

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 175 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 176

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 176, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE WINNERS OF THE 2007 TEN OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN THE NATION'S SERVICE (TOWNS) FOR THEIR UNWAVERING DEVOTION AND LOVE OF COUNTRY.

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

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 176

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 176 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 181

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 181, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE MATH WIZARDS FOR WINNING IN THE 1ST WIZARDS MATHEMATICS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION (WIZMIC) 2007 HELD IN LUCKNOW, INDIA.

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

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 181

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 181 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 183

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 183, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING DR. BALDOMERO M. OLIVERA, HARVARD FOUNDATION 2007 SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR, IN RECOGNITION OF HIS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

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

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 183

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 183 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 184

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 184, entitled

Handwritten signatures and initials:
 A signature that appears to be "L..." and initials "ps" to the right.

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
PROVINCIAL WATER UTILITIES
ACT, AS AMENDED, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Enrile

**To the Committees on Public Works; Public
Services; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1805, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING CASH PRIZES
AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO ALL
NATIONAL ARTISTS OR "*ARTISTA
NG BAYAN*" AWARDEES, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M.
Lapid

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1806, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EDUCA-
TIONAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAIN-
ING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED
PERSONNEL OF THE ARMED
FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M.
Lapid

**To the Committees on National Defense
and Security; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1807, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE
MANDATE ON THE INTERCON-
NECTION BETWEEN AND AMONG
PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATION
ENTITIES, PROVIDING PENALTIES
FOR ITS VIOLATION AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M.
Lapid

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1808, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIP-
PINE AIR FORCE ACADEMY (PAFA),
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M.
Lapid

**To the Committees on National Defense
and Security; Education, Arts and Culture; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1809, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING EQUAL OPPOR-
TUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN CORP-
ORATE PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGE-
MENT THROUGH MANDATED
RATIO DIRECTORSHIPS IN GOVERN-
MENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED
CORPORATIONS

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

**To the Committees on Youth, Women and
Family Relations; and Government Corpora-
tions and Public Enterprises**

Senate Bill No. 1810, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING HYDROPHONICS
AGRICULTURE AS AN INSTRU-
MENT TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OF
FOOD SECURITY AND AS A
MECHANISM OF WISE USE OF
SCARCE LAND RESOURCES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

**To the Committees on Agriculture and
Food; and Education, Arts and Culture**

Senate Bill No. 1811, entitled

AN ACT CELEBRATING THE AGE-
OLD VALUE OF DISTINCT
FILIPINO *BAYANIHAN* SPIRIT,
DECLARING FOR THE PURPOSE
THE 20TH DAY OF OCTOBER OF
EVERY YEAR AS A NATIONAL
THANK YOU DAY ^{16th}

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Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 1812, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACT OF IMPOSING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILDREN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION ACT, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1813, entitled

AN ACT TO INCLUDE TRADITIONAL GAMES AND SPORTS IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P.E.) COURSES IN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1814, entitled

ISANG BATAS NA NAGPAPALAGANAP NG KALINANGANG PILIPINO SA PAMAMAGITAN NG MALAWAKANG PAGSASAMA NG PAGTUTURO NG KULINARYA AT PAGKAING PINOY SA MGA ASIGNATURANG ARALING PANLIPUNAN, HEKASI AT *HOME ECONOMICS* O GAWAING PANTAHANAN AT SA MGA PROGRAMANG TURISMO NG BANSA

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Tourism

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 185, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PEACE, UNIFICATION AND RECONCILIATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE HEIGHTENED MILITARIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAGGAO AND CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN

Introduced by Senator M.A. Madrigal

To the Committees on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Justice and Human Rights

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 186, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICERS AND INVESTIGATIONS TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGED INEFFICIENT, IRREGULAR AND ONE-SIDED POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS) THAT POSE A GROWING BURDEN ON ITS MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO COMPOSE 40% OF ITS MEMBERS

Introduced by Senator M.A. Madrigal

To the Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; and Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 187, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ESCALATING MINING OPERATIONS IN SIBUYAN ISLAND, DUBBED THE "GALAPAGOS OF ASIA" BECAUSE OF ITS UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY, INCLUDING THE "MIDNIGHT APPROVAL" BY THEN OUTGOING DENR SEC. ANGELO REYES TO CUT DOWN AN ESTIMATED 69,709 TREES TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR MINING AND THE KILLING OF ANTI-MINING ADVOCATE AND ROMBLON COUNCILOR ARMIN MARIN ON OCTOBER 3, 2007 DURING A LOCAL PROTEST ACTION

Introduced by Senator M. A. Madrigal

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; and Justice and Human Rights

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 188, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE SPECIAL OLYMPICS TEAM FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT AND VICTORIOUS PARTICIPATION IN THE 2007 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES HELD IN SHANGHAI, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON OCTOBER 2-11, 2007 WHEREIN THEY BROUGHT HOME NINE GOLD MEDALS GIVING OUR COUNTRY GREAT PRIDE, HONOR AND RECOGNITION

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 189, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND

EMPLOYMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN URGENT OMNIBUS INQUIRY ON THE PLIGHT AND PRESENT CONDITIONS OF DETAINED FILIPINO OVERSEAS CONTRACT WORKERS AND OFWs WITH CASES FILED AGAINST THEM IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AN ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL REMEDIES BEING AFFORDED BY OUR EMBASSIES AND CONSULAR OFFICES WITH THE END-IN-VIEW OF FORMULATING REMEDIAL MEASURES AND DEVISING PACKAGE OF ASSISTANCE TO PROTECT OFWs, THE PHILIPPINES' *BAGONG BAYANI*

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), the session was suspended.

It was 3:32 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY OF SENATOR ROXAS

In light of the invocation of executive privilege during the ZTE hearings, Senator Roxas asked if the Body could hold a caucus to come up with an institutional response to the matter.

Affirming the need for a caucus, Senator Cayetano (A) informed the Body that he had directed the staff of the Blue Ribbon Committee to articulate the issues in writing for dissemination to the offices of the senators, particularly on the issues raised by the ZTE lawyers. He said that he would ask the Senate leadership to schedule a caucus as soon as possible to be able to dispose of some important issues. Replying thereto, the Chair said it would schedule a caucus on the matter.

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Senator Roxas suggested that subsequent ZTE hearings be scheduled after the caucus so that by that time, the Senate would already have an institutional position regarding the invocation of executive privilege. Senator Cayetano (A) agreed.

COAUTHORS

Upon his request, Senator Lapid was made coauthor of Senate Bill Nos. 1646, 1697, 1698 and 1699 which were approved on Third Reading the previous day.

Likewise, upon his request, Senator Zubiri was also made coauthor of Senate Bill Nos. 1646, 1697 and 1698.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (A), the session was suspended.

It was 3:35 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

REPORT OF SENATOR EJERCITO ESTRADA

Senator Ejercito Estrada rendered a report on his participation in the Conference on International Migration held in Geneva, Switzerland, to wit:

I am pleased to report to this august Body that last 25 October, I delivered a speech before over a hundred parliamentarians from all over the world at a Conference on International Migration held in Geneva, Switzerland. The three-day conference, which was organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Labor Organization, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, had for its theme, "Migration: The Human Rights Perspective."

The conference was part of the regular activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to strengthen the human rights capacities of parliaments by providing the members with the opportunity to freely discuss and exchange views with human rights experts and colleagues on crucial human rights issues. And since migration is one burning issue that has surfaced

these days, the conference aimed to present and discuss with concerned parliamentarians the human rights framework within which migration issues should be dealt with.

The conference brought together distinguished lawmakers and migration specialists from major labor-receiving countries like the State of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, United Kingdom and Nigeria, among others. The Philippines was in the company of other labor-sending countries like Mexico, Indonesia and Pakistan.

As the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, I welcomed the invitation to be one of the panelists at the conference, which was extended through our colleague, Senator Nene Pimentel, because I saw it as an opportunity to share with our fellow parliamentarians our experience in managing labor migration and the contribution of Congress to the enhancement of the welfare and protection of our overseas workers during the entire migration process. As you very well know, the Philippine Overseas Employment Program, with its structural, legal and policy framework, has been cited by no less than the International Labor Organization as a model in migration management.

In my speech, which I entitled "Challenges of International Labor Migration: the Philippine Parliament Perspective," I talked about the enormous contribution of the eight million overseas Filipinos not only to the Philippine economy, but also to the development of the economies of the receiving states. I asked the participants if they could imagine a world without Filipino workers and the question drew some interesting smile on their faces.

In my speech, I deplored the fact that the Philippine government continued to receive reports of exploitation, violence and abuses, whether physical or verbal, committed against Filipino workers while they are toiling overseas, away from the families. I called upon our fellow parliamentarians, particularly those from the receiving states that comprised the IPU, to help ensure that their governments keep their commitment to the UN and ILO conventions and declarations that they have ratified, particularly those that pertain to migrant workers, or if they have not ratified them, to work towards their ratification.

I proudly informed the Body that the Philippines, which has been a member of the International Labor Organization since 1948, has

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ratified 33 conventions, among which are Convention No. 143 (On Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers) and Convention No. 179 (On Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers). I further informed them that the Philippines was one of the signatories to the U.N. Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families, and in the ASEAN cluster, to the Declaration on the Rights of Migrant Workers.

My speech dwelt on the intervention of the Philippine legislature in the labor migration program through the crafting of laws to protect the rights of Filipino migrant workers. I cited the Philippine Constitution and the Philippine Labor Code that seek to guarantee the protection of Filipino workers, whether employed domestically or overseas. I talked at length about Philippine Republic Act No. 8042, also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, which emphasized the need for government to focus on the promotion of welfare of overseas Filipino workers through empowerment to facilitate their overseas work and their personal, economic and community reintegration at the end of their contract. I spoke about Philippine Republic Act 9422, which strengthened the regulatory power of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and which provided for the deployment of Filipino workers only to countries where the Philippines has concluded bilateral agreements or arrangements, countries that guarantee to protect the rights of our workers and/or countries that observe or comply with the international laws and standards for migrant workers. I took pride in informing them that the Philippine Congress had passed Republic Act No. 9208, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, with no less than Senator Loi Ejercito Estrada as the author of the bill, which recognized human trafficking as a transnational crime. I have called upon transit and destination states to help labor-sending countries address the issue of irregular migration.

I concluded my speech by extending to the participants the invitation to the Global Migration Forum in 2008 that the Philippine government will host. Many had expressed interest to come to Manila for the event and will be another opportunity for us to interact once more with our fellow parliamentarians whose cause and concerns we share.


I am proud to say that my speech was warmly applauded by the participants; some came up to me to congratulate the Philippine government for a dynamic migration program and the Philippine Congress for enacting laws that have helped safeguard the rights of overseas Filipino workers, even while they are in the destination states and upon return to mainstream them back into Philippine society.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

It was 3:48 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


EMMA LIRIO REYES
Secretary of the Senate *168*

Approved on November 7, 2007