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SENATE

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Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT
AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED
ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS AND
POSSIBLE CORRUPTION THAT AFFECTED OUR COUNTRY'S HOSTING
OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED 2019 SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES

1 WHEREAS, the Philippines was awarded the honor of hosting the recently
2 concluded 2019 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games). The 2019 SEA Games was the
3 fourth time that the Philippines has held the biennial event after 1981, 1991 and 2005;

4 WHEREAS, our country pushed through with the hosting after begging off last
5 2017, citing peace and order as the primary reason.¹ Then POC President Jose "Peping"
6 Cojuangco, Jr. confirmed that the country will be hosting the 2019 SEA Games, after
7 Cojuangco wrote to President Rodrigo Duterte and appealed for reconsideration;²

8 WHEREAS, according to commentators, "[h]osting an international sports
9 competition like the 2019 SEA Games is a litmus test of how our young and striving
10 republic can demonstrate to the international community that we have the ability to
11 provide a safe, secure, and reliable venue for celebrating sports and humanity";³

12 WHEREAS, the start of our hosting has been beset by organizational issues. The
13 Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (PHISGOC) itself

¹ *PH withdraws hosting of 2019 SEA games*. ABS-CBN News. (21 July 2017). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/07/21/17/ph-withdraws-hosting-of-2019-sea-games>

² *Giongco, Nick. PH to host 2019 SEA Games*. Manila Bulletin. (17 August 2017). Retrieved from: <https://sports.mb.com.ph/2017/08/17/ph-to-host-2019-sea-games/>

³ *Nepomuceno, Ariel. Sports and politics at the SEA Games*. Business World Online. (8 December 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.bworldonline.com/sports-and-politics-at-the-sea-games/>

1 confirmed the reports saying the teams from Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Cambodia
2 encountered early troubles with their transportation and accommodations;⁴

3 WHEREAS, some members of the Timor-Leste football team were brought to a
4 different hotel a few minutes away from where they had room reservations.
5 Cambodian team coach Félix Dalmás said the team waited "eight to nine hours" for
6 their hotel accommodations. Reports and photos also showed the Myanmar team were
7 transported in a small cramped bus;⁵

8 WHEREAS, in a letter dated Nov. 24 2019 and addressed to Ramon Suzara,
9 Chief Operating Officer of PHISGOC, Singapore Chef De Mission Juliana Seow said
10 Singapore's delegation at the SEA Games dealt with numerous issues ranging from
11 accreditation to insufficient halal food for its athletes and transportation;⁶

12 WHEREAS, Lem Dizon, the coach of the Philippine women's football team,
13 joined by the coaches from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar,
14 bemoaned the poor quality of their initial accommodations ahead of the SEA Games.
15 They said that the quality and quantity of food served to them were not enough;⁷

16 WHEREAS, there were also problems with accreditation of media. Howard
17 Johnson, a BBC Correspondent here in Manila, reported that he received his official
18 accreditation late even after submitting his request more than two months prior to the
19 games.⁸ GMA News Reporters Raffy Tima and Mariz Umali were issued erroneous
20 media ID badges;⁹

⁴ Peralta, Janine. PHISGOC apologizes as 2019 SEA Games hit with early complaints from competing football teams. CNN Philippines (24 November 2019). Retrieved from:

<https://cnnphilippines.com/seagames/2019/11/24/2019-sea-games-complaints.html>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Giongco, Mark. Singapore latest to raise issue on SEA Games food, logistics. Inquirer.net. (25 November 2019). Retrieved from:

<https://sports.inquirer.net/374678/singapore-raises-food-logistics-issues-with-sea-games-organizer>

⁷ Gaglac, Ron. Women's football teams complain of insufficient food ahead of SEAG. ABS-CBN News. (25 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/11/25/19/womens-football-teams-complain-of-insufficient-food-ahead-of-seag>

⁸ Johnson, Howard. Southeast Asian Games off to a rocky start in the Philippines. BBC (28 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50568612>

⁹ Who is Mariz Tima? ID confusion adds to SEA Games woes. GMA News Online (25 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/sports/othersports/716728/who-is-mariz-tima-id-confusion-adds-to-sea-games-woes/story/>

1 WHEREAS, the preparation of some of the venues were delayed, including the
2 Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, New Clark City,¹⁰ and Tagaytay International
3 Convention Center¹¹;

4 WHEREAS, as a result of delays in construction, several of our sports teams
5 considered it as lost opportunity to maximize our homecourt advantage ahead of the
6 games. Mikee Cojuangco of the International Olympics Committee and Bettina Pou of
7 the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines both expressed their frustration over
8 the construction delays as our athletes lost the chance to train in the venue ahead of
9 the games;¹²

10 WHEREAS, Richard delos Santos, a volunteer construction worker who
11 fractured his skull after a bad fall in a rush to complete a venue for the 30th Southeast
12 Asian Games, said he and his coworkers had to work for almost 24 hours straight in
13 Rizal Memorial Stadium to finish in time;¹³

14 WHEREAS, the Photojournalists' Center of the Philippines, a local
15 photojournalist group, had to appeal to the Philippine Sports Commission for access
16 to the events after being denied by PHISGOC access to the venue;¹⁴

17 WHEREAS, several volunteers for the SEA Games aired their grievances over
18 the lack of system and coordination of the volunteer program. A volunteer from Metro
19 Manila, who was assigned under the planning committee, observed that people in
20 charge of the volunteer program didn't conduct coordination meetings prior to the
21 event. This manifested in the lack of process for volunteers to follow. For instance, they

¹⁰ Grande, Gigi. *Organizers race against time to host SEA Games*. ABS-CBN News (19 October 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/10/19/19/organizers-race-against-time-to-complete-some-sea-games-venues>

¹¹ Cinco, Maricar. *SEA Games organizers race to finish skate park, cycling oval*. ABS-CBN (26 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://sports.inquirer.net/374753/organizers-race-to-finish-skae-park-cycling-oval>

¹² SEA Games: Mikee Cojuangco worries Pinoys losing home edge amid building delays. ABS-CBN News (23 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/11/23/19/sea-games-mikee-cojuangco-worries-pinoys-losing-home-edge-amid-building-delays>

¹³ Ornedo, Julia Mari. *Injured construction worker worked almost 24 hours to rush SEA Games venue*. GMA News Online. (26 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/716881/injured-construction-worker-worked-almost-24-hours-to-rush-sea-games-venue/story/>

¹⁴ Dalupang, Denison Rey. *Media members refused access to SEA Games venue in Clark*. Inquirer.net. (1 December 2019). Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1196502/media-members-refused-access-to-sea-games-venue-in-clark>

1 waited 6 hours to get their accreditation IDs and uniforms. Some of them, who were
2 students, had to miss their classes just to complete the process;¹⁵

3 WHEREAS, the same organizational and coordination problems, primarily lack
4 of logistical support to volunteers from the local government units (LGUs) hosting the
5 venues of the games plagued the SEA Games' volunteer component, resulted in
6 demoralization among the LGU volunteers who put in the extra time outside of their
7 official functions to help in the success of the games;

8 WHEREAS, in response to the initial problems, the Department of Tourism
9 (DOT) took over the billeting of foreign athletes participating in the SEA Games
10 following the "initial logistical snafu that led to a number of complaints from the
11 delegates, particularly long hours at the hotel check-in counters, inadequate food, and
12 transportation issues;"¹⁶

13 WHEREAS, private organizations had to step in to address some of the
14 problems. Philippine Football Federation President Mariano "Nonong" Araneta said
15 Southridge School in Alabang offered its artificial pitch as one of the practice venues
16 for the tournaments, while Vallacar Transit, which owns the Ceres Bus line, provided
17 18 of its newest buses to transport teams to their matches;¹⁷

18 WHEREAS, PSC Chairman and current PHISGOC Executive Board's co-vice
19 chairperson William "Butch" Ramirez pointed to two reasons for delayed
20 preparations. "First, the dynamics between POC and PHISGOC officials. Second, the
21 delayed passage of the national budget." He added that "There were enormous
22 disagreements and politics there. PSC was not part of the conflict but I suppose we are
23 partly to blame. We could have intervened";¹⁸

24 WHEREAS, it was reported that "the creation of PHISGOC in 2018 created a
25 deeper divide in an already fragmented POC. While some POC officials were at the

¹⁵ Magsambol, Bonz. Volunteers without leaders do what they can for SEA Games 2019. Rappler (3 December 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/sports/specials/sea-games/246290-volunteers-without-leaders-do-what-they-can-2019>

¹⁶ De Leon, Isabel. *DOT takes over SEAG billeting*. Manila Bulletin. (25 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/11/25/dot-takes-over-seag-billeting>

¹⁷ Tupas, Cedelf. *Private companies step in to help SEA Games hosting*. Inquirer.net (26 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://sports.inquirer.net/374775/private-companies-step-in-to-help-sea-games-hosting>

¹⁸ Grande, Gigi. *Organizers race against time to host SEA Games*. *Supra*

1 forefront of PHISGOC’s incorporation, others were incensed at being sidelined. Each
2 viewed the other with distrust”;¹⁹

3 WHEREAS, according to incumbent POC President and current PHISGOC
4 Executive Board’s co-vice chairperson Abraham “Bambol” Tolentino, “The old POC
5 wanted all decisions of PHISGOC to pass through them, from procurement to
6 preparations to broadcasting and marketing, even venues.” Technically, the friction
7 caused delay;²⁰

8 WHEREAS, Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson questioned the transfer of ₱1.5 billion
9 in public funds for the 2019 SEA Games from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC)
10 to the PHISGOC, a private foundation created to oversee the country’s preparations
11 and hosting of the biennial sports meet;²¹

12 WHEREAS, such transfer of public funds to PHISGOC allowed them to
13 circumvent our procurement laws as they were able to operate without having to
14 undergo public bidding;²²

15 WHEREAS, even President Rodrigo Duterte expressed his misgivings over the
16 PHISGOC handling the hosting of the 2019 SEA Games. According to Presidential
17 Spokesperson Salvador Panelo, “He (Duterte) said that he doesn’t want the
18 foundation, *gusto niya gobyerno. Sabi niya maraming korapsyon diyan sa private*
19 *kaya nasisira yung mga diskarte ng andiyan, kaya gusto niya gobyerno*”;²³

20 WHEREAS, Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon likewise earlier
21 questioned the release of public funds to PHISGOC and pushed for an inquiry into the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Pazzibugan, Donna and Marlon Ramos. *Lacson: SEA Games fund put in foundation like ‘Napoles case’*. Inquirer.net. (28 November 2019). Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1195420/lacson-sea-games-fund-put-in-foundation-like-napoles-case>

²² Buan, Lian. *₱1.5 billion worth of SEA Games funds will not undergo public bidding*. Rappler. (19 November 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/245315-budget-sea-games-2019-will-not-undergo-public-bidding>

²³ Merez, Arianne. *Duterte rejects PHISGOC as SEA Games organizer due to alleged corruption: Palace*. ABS-CBN News. (16 July 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/07/16/19/duterte-rejects-phisgoc-as-sea-games-organizer-due-to-alleged-corruption-palace>

1 ₱55 million cauldron used for the 2019 SEA Games, saying that “₱55 million is an
2 extravagance that is so unnecessary and somebody has to answer for this”;²⁴

3 WHEREAS, there is a need to investigate the rigmarole financing transaction
4 for the construction of the New Clark City athletic facilities in Capas, Tarlac, involving
5 the granting of the loan contract without public bidding²⁵ to Malaysian firm MTD
6 Capital Berhad by the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) under the
7 leadership of its Chairman Vivencio Dizon, a former staffer of House Speaker Alan
8 Peter Cayetano, which in turn was itself financed with a P9.5 Billion loan to MTD²⁶
9 from the Development Bank of the Philippines, thus raising issues if the transaction
10 resulted in the most advantageous loan contract price for the Philippine government,
11 considering that the money used for the construction of the facility ultimately came
12 from a Philippine government-controlled financial institution;²⁷

13 WHEREAS, according to Presidential Spokesperson Panelo, President Duterte
14 wants an investigation of the 2019 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games mess, including the
15 allegations of “incompetence and corruption” thrown at its organizing committee.
16 Panelo added that, “the President is not pleased [with] what he’s been hearing about
17 certain snafus, certain delays, certain allegations of athletes not being fed properly,
18 athletes arriving late or not on time delivered to their places of rest or residence”;²⁸

19 WHEREAS, as we celebrate our athletes’ most successful campaign in recent
20 memory, it is likewise important for our government to scrutinize our performance
21 both as a host country and as patrons to our athletes;

²⁴ *Drilon questions P700-M fund released to PHISGOC*. ABS-CBN News (19 November 2019). Retrieved from:
<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/19/19/drilon-questions-p700-m-fund-released-to-phisgoc>

²⁵ *OGCC flagged non-bidding of BCDA’s New Clark sports facilities*. Rappler.com. (04 December 2019).
Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/245557-office-government-corporate-counsel-non-bidding-bcda-new-clark-sports-facilities>

²⁶ *BCDA, Malaysian firm ink questionable P11-billion SEA Games deal*. Rappler.com. (04 November 2019).
Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/245511-bcda-mtd-capital-berhad-sea-games-deal>

²⁷ *BCDA defends joint venture for SEA Games sports facilities*. Rappler.com. (22 November 2019). Retrieved
from <https://www.rappler.com/business/245565-bcda-defends-joint-venture-sea-games-facilities>

²⁸ Roxas, Patricia. *Duterte wants probe of SEA Games mess*. Inquirer.net (26 November 2019). Retrieved from:
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1194907/duterte-wants-probe-of-sea-games-mess-including-cayetano-p50-m-cauldron>

1 WHEREAS, Senator Lacson said that the success of Filipino athletes in the 30th
2 Southeast Asian Games should not be an excuse to cancel a Senate probe on alleged
3 irregularities in the mounting of the biennial regional meet;³²

4 WHEREAS, the reports on organizational problems surrounding our
5 preparation betrays a political dynamic that could translate to even greater problems
6 in our sports programs in the future;

7 WHEREAS, there is also need to scrutinize the organizational structure through
8 which our country hosts international sporting events to ensure that the funds will be
9 properly given to institutions with the mandate and capability to properly utilize them;

10 WHEREAS, proper management and governance necessitates that we conduct
11 an inquiry on the recently concluded SEA Games especially after the problems
12 encountered were duly documented by the mass media;

13 WHEREAS, there is need to investigate the existing sports legislation to ensure
14 that support and funding are given to the agencies that have the proper mandate and
15 that accountability lies even with private organizations, especially those who have
16 access to government resources;

17 WHEREAS, while problems of disorganization, incompetence, and inefficiency
18 can be resolved through institutional mechanisms, what cannot be countenanced is
19 the scandalous probability that in the middle of all this disorganization and
20 incompetence, certain high public officials still might have enriched themselves in the
21 procurement of government contracts for the hosting of the games, including a P55
22 million contraption allegedly worth only P500,000.00 in a P9.5 billion athletic facility
23 financed with money sourced from the DBP and loaned back to the government
24 through the BCDA by a Malaysian firm without any public bidding;

25 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY**
26 **RESOLVED**, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an investigation,
27 in aid of legislation, on the reported organizational and administrative problems and

³² Domingo, Katrina. *PH medal haul not an excuse to cancel Senate probe vs SEA Games: Lacson*. ABS-CBN News. (12 December 2019). Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/12/19/ph-medal-haul-not-an-excuse-to-cancel-senate-probe-vs-sea-games-lacson>

- 1 possible corruption that affected our country's hosting of the recently concluded 2019
- 2 Southeast Asian Games.

Adopted,

Leila de Lima
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