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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2018 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the presentations on the proposed FY 2018 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and the Judiciary.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Anna Cristina Go (2nd District, Isabela) sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DAR. She was later replaced by Committee Vice Chair PBA Party-List Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar because she has to attend to an equally important commitment.</p> <p>DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano said that under the FY 2018 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the Department is set to receive P10.28 billion, which is 1.4% higher than its current budget of P10.14 billion.</p> <p>By expense class, DAR's 2018 proposed budget will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P4.25 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P4.78 billion; and capital outlay (CO), P1.24 billion.</p> <p>Aside from the DAR's allocation, an additional P1.14 billion will be allocated in 2018 for the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) by other implementing agencies, namely: National Irrigation Authority (NIA), P501.53 million; Land Registration Authority (LRA), P273.05 million; Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), P260.85 million; and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), P99.87 million.</p> <p>For the land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component of CARP, DAR reports that there are still 602,306 hectares around the country which are being targeted for acquisition and distribution to benefit approximately 515,950 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). However, only a small portion of this overall target is expected to be undertaken this year (48,588 hectares) and in 2018 (53,841 hectares).</p> <p>Mariano also presented the other accomplishments of DAR, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On agrarian justice delivery, DAR was able to resolve 511,243 cases out of 519,029 cases from 1988 to June 2016; On farm mechanization, a total of 2,875 common service facilities (CSF) were procured and mostly distributed to farmers nationwide; On production credit, almost P4 billion loans were released from 2013 to March 2017, extended to 723 organizations benefitting 43,583 farmers; On ARB development, training programs were launched

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission on Human Rights (CHR) 	<p>aimed at building ARBs' entrepreneurial skills, facilitating their access to capital and credit, and improving the productivity of their lands.</p> <p>When asked about the original budget proposal DAR submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Mariano said that the original budget request amounts to P16 billion.</p> <p>Most of the House Members present in the meeting agreed to push for the reinstatement of the amount slashed by DBM from the original budget request of DAR intended for its land inventory and validation project.</p> <p>Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) Senior Vice President Alex Lorayes said that the LBP has receivables amounting to P60 billion from ARBs, who are either individual farmers or farmers' associations such as cooperatives. He clarified that not the entire amount is due and demandable because the amortization of the lands awarded to farmers under the CARP is for a period of 30 years. In as far as the amortization of individual farmers are concerned, the collection rate is 60%, according to Lorayes, adding that LBP has already remitted P6 billion to the Bureau of Treasury.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Raul del Mar (1st District, Cebu City) sat as the presiding officer during the CHR's budget briefing.</p> <p>CHR Chair Jose Luis Martin Gascon said the Department of Budget and Management (DBM)-recommended FY 2018 budget for CHR and its attached agencies amounting to P678.05 million is 10% lower than this year's P749.35 million budget. Of this amount, P649.48 million goes to the CHR and P28.56 million to its attached agency, the Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commission (HVVRMC).</p> <p>Gascon explained that the 10% decrease in the 2018 proposed budget is due to the significant reduction in the allocation for CHR's capital outlay from this year's P103.05 million to only P11.73 million for 2018.</p> <p>Gascon also informed the Committee that there will be no allocation for the Human Rights Violations Claims Board (HRVCB), explaining that the reparation program for the victims of human rights violation during the Marcos regime is due for completion by May of next year. He added that partial payments under this program have already been made to the claimants.</p> <p>When asked by Rep. Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay) about alleged human rights violations in certain areas in Mindanao amidst the implementation of martial law in the region, Gascon replied that documentation and validation of reports on human rights violations are still ongoing.</p> <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte) criticized the CHR for "over-sympathizing" with criminals and drug-pushers while discounting the rights of injured and fallen policemen and soldiers. Speaker Alvarez urged the CHR to be impartial in performing its duty to avoid a misguided public perception on the state of human rights in the country.</p> <p>Similarly, KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Harry Roque Jr. questioned CHR's notable silence with regard to the impunities committed by the previous administration. He said that Gascon's previous affiliation with the Liberal Party weakens his integrity to fairly and effectively lead the Commission.</p> <p>Gascon admitted that the Commission has institutional gaps that</p>
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<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judiciary 	<p>need to be addressed. Nevertheless, he vowed that the CHR will remain impartial in uncovering the truth regardless of party affiliations.</p> <p>The CHR was requested to submit a validated report on any human rights violation associated with the administration's "war on drugs" and the implementation of martial law in Mindanao.</p> <p>Supreme Court Deputy Administrator Raul Villanueva said that under the FY 2018 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the Judiciary and its attached agencies are set to receive P34.77 billion, which is 6% higher than their 2017 budget of P32.77 billion.</p> <p>The Judiciary's proposed budget for 2018 is distributed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supreme Court of the Philippines and Lower Courts (SCPLC) - P31.40 billion; Court of Appeals (CA) - P2.09 billion; Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) - P599.85 million; Sandiganbayan (SB) - P556.65 million; and Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) - P122.42 million. <p>Villanueva reported the accomplishment of the Judiciary in terms of target case disposal versus actual cases disposed for the first half of 2017. He also discussed the major programs initiated by the Judiciary to improve its performance.</p> <p>Villanueva proposed the deletion of the special provisions in the 2018 NEP with regard to the funding requirements for the filling of unfilled positions. He noted that the inclusion of such provision infringes on the fiscal autonomy of their courts. He likewise proposed the re-wording of the provisions on the Special Allowance for Justices and Judges, and on Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses of Lower Courts.</p> <p>In response to the query of Rep. Harry Roque Jr. (Party-List, KABAYAN), Villanueva said that the Judiciary has formed a data reconciliation technical working group that will study the aging of cases pending in court. Rep. Roque said that the length of time cases have been pending in court sends a wrong notion that the country's criminal justice system is not working.</p> <p>On the question raised by 1-CARE Party-List Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta, Villanueva said that judges are provided with security personnel especially during court proceedings. However, he added that the provision of additional close-in or personal security is possible but only under certain terms and conditions.</p> <p>Rep. Uybarreta emphasized that it should have been a policy in the Judiciary to provide these judges with security personnel. He manifested his support to increase the budget of the Judiciary in order to provide one security personnel per judge given their exposure to threats from lawless elements.</p> <p>Majority of the Members of the Committee pushed for an increase in the budget of the Judiciary to address the slow resolution of cases in the country.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs	HR 1054	Rep. Barbers	Inquiry into the P6.4 billion worth of shabu seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), will

<p>Continuation... Dangerous Drugs</p>	<p>HR 1057</p>	<p>Rep. Gatchalian</p>	<p>Investigation into the illegal entry, through the BOC express lane, of more than P5 billion worth of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu)</p>	<p>deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 1054 and 1057 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee, with the approval of the Office of the Speaker, granted the request of Mark Ruben Taguba II to be given legislative immunity and placed under the government's Witness Protection Program to assure his safety as he reveals the names of rogue personalities who are allegedly receiving payola, also called "tara," of P27,000 per container van to facilitate its release from customs.</p> <p>Taguba, acting as a "facilitator" to customs brokers, narrated that he sought the services of EMT Trading as a "consignee-for-hire" of the shipment which included the five wooden crates containing 604 kilos of shabu that were seized by the BOC together with the agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in two warehouses in Valenzuela City on May 26.</p> <p>Taguba named the following BOC officials who allegedly received bribe money from him, through his agents, in the transactions he handled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Commissioner Teddy Sandy Raval, Intelligence Group (IG); • Director Neil Anthony Estrella, Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS); • Director Milo Maestrecampo, Import Assessment Service, Assessment and Operational Coordinating Group (IAS-AOCG); • District Collector Vincent Philip Maronilla, Manila International Container Port (MICP); • Teodoro Sagara, MICP, CIIS District Intelligence Officer II; and • Certain Major "Tikoy" Gutierrez (deceased), District Commander, MICP. <p>Taguba also submitted a list of persons receiving "taras" whom he believes to be linked with the above BOC officials.</p> <p>Named BOC officials however denied outrightly their involvement in any bribery within the Bureau.</p> <p>Taguba also recalled that he delivered a "large amount of money" to a certain "Tita Nani" of BOC's IAS but found out later that the main beneficiary of the bribe money was the "Davao Group" purportedly led by Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo Duterte. He, however, said that it must have been another case of name-dropping which usually happens in any illicit transaction.</p> <p>Responding to the query of AKO BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe, BOC Lawyer Alvin Ebreo said that no cases have been filed in</p>
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Continuation... Dangerous Drugs				<p>court relative to the smuggling of the P6.4 billion worth of shabu.</p> <p>Rep. Batocabe asserted that Richard Tan, also known as Richard Chen and Chen Ju Long, should have already been charged with smuggling of dangerous drugs immediately after the conduct of the raids, being the owner of the warehouse where the contraband was found.</p> <p>The Committee, jointly with the Committee on Ways and Means, will conduct an ocular inspection of the subject warehouses and the facilities of NBI and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) where the confiscated shabu are being kept.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Higher and Technical Education (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 5315	Rep. Deloso-Montalla	Strengthening the Ramon Magsaysay Technological University (RTMU) as a state university, renaming it as the President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU), and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), approved the draft Substitute Bill to HB 5315, with amendments.</p> <p>The bill will be submitted to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as template HB 4650, authored by Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3rd District, Pampanga), which also seeks to rename a technological state university into a comprehensive state university; • Include tourism and hospitality management, medicine and other health-related courses, agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the list of courses that will be offered by the President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU); • Include as members of the PRMSU Board of Regents two academicians and three chief executive officers from national or multinational companies; and • Make the incumbent president of RTMU as the first president of the PRMSU until the end of his current term.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>Congressional Oversight Committee on the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (COCCAAP) – House Panel</p>	<p>Discussion on the proposed amendments to RA 9497, otherwise known as the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) Act of 2008</p>	<p>The House contingent of the Congressional Oversight Committee on the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (COCCAAP), presided by the Chair of the House Committee on Transportation, Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, discussed the proposed amendments to RA 9497 to address the issues besetting the aviation sector.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento said that these proposed amendments will constitute in a bill that he will file together with Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte), Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte), and Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon).</p> <p>Among the proposed amendments to RA 9497 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate CAAP's regulatory and operational functions to avoid conflict of interest; • Transfer the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to CAAP; • Restore the term of CAAP's Director General to four years; • Enhance CAAP's fiscal autonomy; and • Exempt CAAP from the Salary Standardization Law (SSL). <p>Rep. Sarmiento also said that the House contingent will push for the establishment of regional growth centers by developing the regional airports; monitor the operationalization of the communications, navigation, surveillance - air traffic management (CNS-ATM) at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA); utilize and further develop Clark International Airport; and explore strategies that will put a cap to the daily flights going in and out of the Mactan-Cebu airport in view of the congestion and delayed flights.</p> <p>Finally, Rep. Sarmiento said he is hopeful that the issue on the Commission on Audit's (COA) disallowance of additional compensation and benefits granted to the aviation personnel will finally be resolved.</p> <p>The House panel of COCCAAP will soon meet with its Senate counterpart.</p>