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House of Representatives

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No. 30

CALL TO ORDER

At 10:00 a.m., Deputy Speaker Frederick "Erick" F. Abueg called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is hereby called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Everybody is requested to rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer and meditation.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.
I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading and Communications, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 3749, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NINTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT ZAMBOANGA CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 10301 WHICH CREATED FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN ZAMBOANGA CITY, WHICH FURTHER AMENDED BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3750, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10613 BY INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF ZAMBOANGA CITY MEDICAL CENTER FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) TO EIGHT HUNDRED (800), UPGRADING ITS GENERAL SERVICE FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF

ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3751, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE MINIMUM
SALARY GRADE LEVEL OF PUBLIC
SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM SALARY
GRADE 11 TO 19”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 3752, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE AUTOMATION
OF A NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL
DATABASE”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3753, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE MEDICINE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE POOR
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY
ALLEVIATION

House Bill No. 3754, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SUMMARY
TITLING OF REAL PROPERTIES USED AS
PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES”

By Representative Rocamora
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3755, entitled:

“AN ACT EXPANDING THE PURPOSES
AND APPLICATION OF THE SPECIAL
EDUCATION FUND (SEF), AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 272 OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CODE OF 1991, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Rocamora
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3756, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE ECONOMIC
ZONE AND FREEPORT IN THE PROVINCE
OF SOUTHERN LEYTE CREATING FOR
THIS PURPOSE THE SOUTHERN LEYTE
ECONOMIC ZONE AND FREEPORT
AUTHORITY APPROPRIATING

FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Mercado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 3757, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING OLD-AGE PENSION
BENEFIT TO RETIREES UNDER REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 1616, AS AMENDED, FOR AGED 70
YEARS OR OVER, AND PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND
FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 3758, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPOSING A THREE-YEAR BAN
ON FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
FROM ENGAGING IN EMPLOYMENT
OR BUSINESS RELATED TO THEIR
PREVIOUS AGENCY, POSITION OR
FUNCTION IN GOVERNMENT TO
PREVENT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
AND USE OF UNDUE INFLUENCE, AND
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE
AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 3759, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL GOVERNMENT
AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS, MEDICAL
CENTERS, CLINICS, INFIRMARIES, AND
PUERICULTURE CENTERS TO GIVE FREE
MEDICAL AND DENTAL ASSISTANCE TO
INDIGENT CHILDREN”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3760, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MAGNA
CARTA FOR BARANGAYS, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Bagatsing
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3761, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A SEPARATE
CURRICULUM FOR PHYSICAL
EDUCATION, DISTINCT FROM THE MUSIC,

ARTS AND HEALTH CURRICULUM,
AND PROVIDE MORE INSTRUCTIONAL
HOURS THEREFOR”

By Representative Del Rosario
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3762, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING NORTHERN QUEZON
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN
THE PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 3763, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REFORESTATION
OF ONE HUNDRED HECTARES OF PUBLIC
LAND IN BARANGAY MAGSAYSAY,
MUNICIPALITY OF INFANTA AND
BARANGAY PANGSAHAN,
MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL NAKAR
IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
REFORESTATION

House Bill No. 3764, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE
REHABILITATION AND MODERNIZATION
OF PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL (PGH),
CREATING PGH REHABILITATION AND
MODERNIZATION FUND, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3765, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING EVERY FOURTH DAY
OF NOVEMBER AS A SPECIAL NON-
WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE
OF QUEZON”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3766, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE
KNOWN AS BARANGAY APAD IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF JOMALIG, PROVINCE
OF QUEZON”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3767, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING HAZARD PAY TO
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT JUDGES AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gonzaga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3768, entitled:

“AN ACT REVIVING THE PHILIPPINE
CONSTABULARY AND REORGANIZING
THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE,
AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF
REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED SIXTY-NINE
HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE ENTITLED,
‘AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE
NATIONAL POLICE UNDER REORGANIZED
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES,’ AS AMENDED”

By Representative Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER
AND SAFETY

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 390, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING JESLYN
SANTOS FOR WINNING THE MISS UNITED
CONTINENTS 2016 HELD AT THE PALACIO
DE CRISTAL IN GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 391, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION TO FAST TRACK THE
DEVELOPMENT AND UPGRADING OF THE
CLARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (CRK)
TO PROVIDE BETTER ALTERNATIVE
TO DECONGEST THE NINOY AQUINO
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA) AND
FOR THE GREATER EFFICIENCY OF THE
AIR AND LAND TRANSPORT INDUSTRY
IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Lazatin
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Resolution No. 392, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON GLOBALIZATION AND
WTO, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLICATIONS
OF THE EXPIRATION OF THE SPECIAL
TREATMENT ON RICE UNDER THE
AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE OF THE
URUGUAY ROUND OF THE GENERAL

AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND
TRADE”

By Representative Villarín

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 393, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS TO
RESTORE THE P351.9 MILLION BUDGET
SLASHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT FROM THE
MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING
EXPENSES OF 35 STATE UNIVERSITIES
AND COLLEGES IN THE PROPOSED
2017 NATIONAL BUDGET AND STUDY
OPTIONS TO ESTABLISH FREE PUBLIC
EDUCATION FOR ALL AT ALL LEVELS”

By Representative Elago

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria for House Bills No.
534, 2505, 2774, 2775, 2906 and 3509;

Reps. Seth Frederic P. Jalosjos, Manuel Luis T.
Lopez, Federico “Ricky” S. Sandoval II, Maximo B. Dalog
and Zajid G. Mangudadatu for House Bill No. 56;

Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. SyAlvarado
for House Bills No. 3670 and 3671;

Rep. Joaquin M. Chipeco Jr. for House Bills No.
543 and 621;

Rep. Nancy A. Catamco for House Resolution No.
393;

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III for House
Bills No. 3518, 3519, 3520, 3521, 3606, 3607, 3608
and 3635;

Rep. Ramon C. Nolasco for House Bill No. 1853;

Rep. Ana Cristina Siquian Go for House Bills No.
1554, 1555, 1853, 2141, 3556, 3557 and 3632;

Rep. Cesar V. Sarmiento for House Bill No. 190;

Rep. Renato J. Unico Jr. for House Bills No. 1036,
1083 and 1084;

Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo for House
Bill No. 192;

Rep. Franz E. Alvarez for House Bill No. 3498; and

Rep. Romero “Miro” S. Quimbo for Resolution of
Both Houses No. 2.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated September 2, 2016 of Tomas M. Rodriguez,
Assistant Regional Director, Region XI, Department
of Public Works and Highways, transmitting to the
House of Representatives the monthly progress
status reports of projects implemented by the Office
for the month of August 2016.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

Letter dated September 6, 2016 of Ma. Corazon S.
Gomez, Regional Director, Regional Office No. III,
Commission on Audit, transmitting copies of Financial
Audit Reports on the following water districts:

1. Mayantoc Water District, Mayantoc, Tarlac
(2013 and 2014);
2. Sta. Ignacia Water District, Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac
(2013 and 2014);
3. Ramos Water District, Ramos, Tarlac (2013 and
2014);
4. Sta. Maria Water District, Sta. Maria, Bulacan
(2013 and 2014);
5. Hagonoy Water District, Hagonoy, Bulacan
(2013 and 2014);
6. Talavera Water District, Talavera, Nueva Ecija
(2013 and 2014);
7. Muñoz Water District, Science City of Muñoz,
Nueva Ecija (2013 and 2014);
8. Macabebe Water District, Macabebe, Pampanga
(2013 and 2014);
9. Cuyapo Water District, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija
(2013 and 2014);
10. Lupao Water District, Lupao, Nueva Ecija
(2013 and 2014);
11. Talugtug Water District, Talugtug, Nueva Ecija
(2013 and 2014);
12. Hermosa Water District, Hermosa, Bataan
(2013 and 2014);
13. Morong Water District, Morong, Bataan (2013
and 2014);
14. Meycauayan Water District, Meycauayan,
Bulacan (2014);
15. San Jose Del Monte City Water District, City
of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan (2014);
16. City of San Fernando Water District, City of
San Fernando, Pampanga (2014);
17. Mariveles Water District, Mariveles, Bataan
(2014);
18. Norzagaray Water District, Norzagaray,
Bulacan (2014);
19. Cabiao Water District, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija (2014);
20. Mabalacat City Water District, Mabalacat City,
Pampanga (2014);
21. San Felipe Water District, San Felipe, Zambales
(2014);
22. Guagua Water District, Guagua, Pampanga
(2014);
23. Angeles City Water District, Angeles City,
Pampanga (2014);
24. Orani Water District, Orani, Bataan (2013, 2014
and 2015);
25. Masantol Water District, Masantol, Pampanga
(2013, 2014 and 2015);

26. Cabanatuan City Water District, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija (2015);
27. Lubao Water District, Lubao, Pampanga (2015);
28. Limay Water District, Limay, Bataan (2015);
29. Baliwag Water District, Baliuag, Bulacan (2015);
30. Paniqui Water District, Paniqui, Tarlac (2015);
31. Subic Water District, Subic, Zambales (2015);
32. Moncada Water District, Moncada, Tarlac (2015);
33. Camiling Water District, Camiling, Tarlac (2015);
34. Bagac Water District, Bagac, Bataan (2015);
35. Guimba Water District, Guimba, Nueva Ecija (2014 and 2015);
36. Concepcion Water District, Concepcion, Tarlac (2014 and 2015);
37. San Ildefonso Water District, San Ildefonso, Bulacan (2014 and 2015);
38. Gen. Tinio Water District, Gen. Tinio, Nueva Ecija (2014 and 2015);
39. Castillejos Water District, Castillejos, Zambales (2014 and 2015);
40. Gapan City Water District, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija (2014 and 2015);
41. Angat Water District, Angat, Bulacan (2014 and 2015);
42. Balagtas Water District, Balagtas, Bulacan (2014 and 2015); and
43. San Marcelino Water District, San Marcelino, Zambales (2014 and 2015).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated September 13, 2016 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Commission on Audit, Regional Office No. VI, transmitting a copy on the Annual Audit Report on the Banate Water District, Banate, Iloilo for the years ended December 31, 2008 to 2014.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few minutes to allow the technical staff and the resource persons of the Committee access to the floor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is suspended.

It was 10:08 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:10 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I move that we consider now House Bill No. 3408 and ask that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, reading: House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

COMMISSION ON AUDIT

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, our parliamentary status is that we are in the period of interpellation and debate.

We move that we consider the budget of the Commission on Audit (COA) and we would like to acknowledge the presence of our Chairperson, Michael G. Aguinaldo; Commissioner Jose A. Fabia; Assistant Commissioner of the Corporate Government Sector, Winnie Rose H. Encallado; Assistant Commissioner, National Government Sector, Susan P. Garcia; Assistant Commissioner, Finance and Management Sector, Carmela S. Perez; Assistant Commissioner, Special Services Sector, Alexander B. Juliano; Assistant Commissioner of STSS, Manolo C. Sy of the COA family.

For the purpose of the sponsorship of the budget of the COA, I move that we recognize the honorable Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Honorable Leachon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Leachon is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Dep. Majority Leader and our guests in the plenary.

We have here our guests from the Commission on Audit, of course, headed by Chairman Michael Aguinaldo.

At this juncture, Mr. Speaker, I would like to manifest that we are ready for interpellation.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, we move for the recognition of our esteemed honorable Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, the Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Before we recognize the honorable Gentleman from Manila, may we welcome first our guests for today.

The named guests earlier, will you please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Honorable Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Dep. Majority Leader, and honorable Sponsor.

At this juncture, we would like to state for the record that we in the Minority accept the fact that the Commission on Audit is doing a very critical role in balancing our government’s effectivity in its functions.

Alam po namin na napaka-importante ng trabaho ng Commission on Audit. Kami nga po ay nalungkot dahil mayroong mga nagsasabing dapat alisin na ito, dapat magkaroon ng emergency power, i-suspend lahat iyong mga tungkulin at trabaho ng Commission on Audit. So, on the part of the Minority, if we cannot improve or increase the budget of the Commission on Audit, we have decided not to interpellate anymore, and we would like to hasten the approval of the budget of the Commission on Audit to send a message to all that we should support its functions. So, on the part of the Minority, we are all dispensing with the questions that some of us initially wanted to ask and we would like to give the honorable Chairman Aguinaldo and his family all the best wishes that they do a finer job this coming year.

Maraming, maraming salamat po. We move for the termination of the period of interpellation to really get the approval of the Body on the pending budget proposal. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in closing the period of sponsorship and debate on the budget of the Commission on Audit.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Commission on Audit.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. *(Applause)*

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE COMPETITION COMMISSION

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission. We would like to acknowledge the presence of Dr. Arsenio Balisacan and Mme. Commissioner Estella Quimbo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The guests named, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, for the purpose of the defense of the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission, I move that we recognize the honorable Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Honorable Sambar is recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Esteemed colleagues and our guests from the different agencies, good morning. I am now ready to answer questions for this agency.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning to everyone. On behalf of the Minority, I move that we close the period of sponsorship

and debate on the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission as there are no more members of the Minority who wish to ask questions.

I do so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in moving for the closure of the period of sponsorship and debate on the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion to close the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM FILIPINOS

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I move that we consider the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. For that purpose, we would like to acknowledge the presence of Secretary Yasmin Busran-Lao and Executive Director Tahir Lidasan Jr. and thereafter, recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar for the defense of the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Sambar is recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Representation is now ready to answer questions for the NCMF.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, on behalf of the Minority, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony "Tony" M. Bravo.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There being no other Member from the Minority who wishes to ask questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we join the Minority in moving for the closure of the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion to close the interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none, the motion is approved. (*Applause*)

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I move that we consider the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), and for that purpose, we would like to acknowledge the presence of Chairman Orlando R. Ravanera.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we move that we recognize as its Sponsor, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Sambar is recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Representation is ready to answer questions for the Cooperative Development Authority.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, on behalf of the Minority, and for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good morning once again. Will the Gentleman, the good Sponsor of this budget of CDA, yield to some questions from this Representation?

REP. SAMBAR. It will be my pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Your Honor. Mr. Speaker, Article 2 of Republic Act No. 9520, under Declaration of Policy, states:

It is the declared policy of the State to foster the creation and growth of cooperatives as a practical vehicle for promoting self-reliance

and harnessing people power towards the attainment of economic development and social justice. The State shall encourage the private sector to undertake the actual formation and organization of cooperatives and shall create an atmosphere that is conducive to the growth and development of these cooperatives.

Toward this end, the Government and all its branches, subdivisions, instrumentalities and agencies shall ensure the provision of technical guidance, financial assistance and other services to enable said cooperatives to develop into viable and responsive economic enterprises and thereby bring about a strong cooperative movement that is free from any conditions that might infringe upon the autonomy or organizational integrity of cooperatives.

This, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, is a guiding principle and as such, CDA, among others, was created to regulate and execute this function to develop the cooperatives in the entire country. Am I correct with this statement?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Along that line, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, what are the functions or responsibilities of the CDA?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, part of the functions of the CDA includes the policy formulation, adoption and implementation of integrated and comprehensive plan and programs on cooperative development consistent with the national policy on cooperatives and the overall socio-economic development of the government. In addition, it develops and conducts management and training programs upon the request of cooperatives that will provide members of cooperatives the entrepreneurial capabilities, managerial expertise and technical skills required for the efficient operation of their coops.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that candid answer, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. In other words, generally, the CDA has two major functions—regulatory and developmental functions. Am I correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). As far as these major functions of the CDA, are we confident that the CDA is delivering these services including not only the regulatory function

but the developmental function to our cooperatives in the entire country?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, in terms of the regulatory function of the CDA, we are more than competent to properly regulate the proper agencies. However, in terms of development and training, unfortunately, their funds are not enough.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Will you please elaborate further that, while the CDA is mandated by law to exercise its mandate under the developmental function as you made mention a while ago, the CDA cannot dispense this function. Why?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the CDA is tasked to give support to 25,000 coops nationwide, especially the 82 percent micro and small cooperatives. Although the budget of the CDA has been consistently increasing over the past few years, for them to undertake a national training and development program to help all these coops, they will still need some additional budgetary increase.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Meaning, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, while the CDA is mandated by law to execute its developmental function, it cannot fully execute this function because of budgetary constraints, am I correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, in terms of the regulatory function, the CDA has no problem in executing their function. It is just the lack of funds for further training and development that is the foremost problem of the CDA.

REP. BRAVO (A.). That falls under the developmental function, not on regulatory function, am I correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). If we really want that the CDA will be able to start its function, its developmental function, then, therefore, there should be sufficient funds that should be provided for the agency.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is correct. It is within the power of this Congress and its Members to suggest further funding for the CDA.

REP. BRAVO (A.). By the way, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, how many cooperatives are registered in this country?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the CDA has about 25,610 registered cooperatives nationwide.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Twenty-five thousand six hundred ...

REP. SAMBAR. Ten.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ... ten registered cooperatives in the entire country. Approximately, how many individuals?

REP. SAMBAR. Approximately, there are 14 million members, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Fourteen million members, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. How much is the budget being proposed for the CDA for Fiscal Year 2017?

REP. SAMBAR. For Fiscal Year 2017, Your Honor, the proposed budget of the CDA is P823 million, but in the NEP, there is only P429.817 million.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Please repeat, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. How much was the original proposed budget?

REP. SAMBAR. The original proposed budget was P838 million.

REP. BRAVO (A.). It is P338 million only.

REP. SAMBAR. It is P800—P838 million, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, it is P838 million, and in the NEP?

REP. SAMBAR. In the NEP, it's P429.817 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). It is P429 million. How much was slashed, it is almost P500 million, am I right?

REP. SAMBAR. Approximately, P400 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Approximately, P400 million.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, this is really very sad on the part of this Representation. So, may I go further, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Of the 25,000 registered cooperatives, how many are doing business or are operating?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, most of these cooperatives are in business right now, but we have to take into consideration that 57 percent belongs to the micro category, and 25 percent to the small.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, 57 percent belongs to ...

REP. SAMBAR. The micro cooperatives.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Micro, which means—will you please educate our listeners.

REP. SAMBAR. Which means that their assets are below P3 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the micro is about 21,046 cooperatives, which is 82 percent of the composition of the total cooperatives in the whole nation; the small is about 2,689, which is 10.5 percent; medium is 1,441, which comprises 5.6 percent; and large is 434, which comprises about 1.7 percent.

The definition is as follows, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor: for micro, the total assets is P3 million and below; for small, P3 million to P15 million; for medium, P15 million to P100 million; and for large, it is above P100 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, for that answer, for apprising us of the data.

To sum it up and to give our Commissioner the exact view of the situation of the cooperatives in the entire country, it appears that 92.7 percent belongs to micro and small cooperatives, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Am I correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Of these cooperatives, how many cooperatives are either engaged in agriculture or have agricultural farmers as members?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, according to the CDA, there are 7,421 cooperatives that are part of the agricultural.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you. So, there are 7,421 cooperatives, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, to where our farmers and fisherfolk belong. Approximately, how many farmers and fisherfolk are in these cooperatives?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, about 8,000,000 individuals are part of these cooperatives.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, 8,000,000 individual members of micro and small cooperatives are farmers and fisherfolk, the poorest of the poor. For me, with the meager budget for the CDA, they are being neglected.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, what could be the reason for those cooperatives that are not operating?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the primary reason for the non-operation of these

cooperatives would be the insufficiency of funds for their training and other budgetary constraints, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, do you think, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, that if these fisherfolk, farmers, even the urban poor and the poorest of the poor will join the cooperative, and we will be able to stand in this cooperative, will this give impact to changing their lives as far as economics is concerned?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I believe so.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, if you believe that if we will be able to strengthen the micro and small cooperatives, this will give the impact of a better life to our farmers, fisherfolk and urban poor, then I think, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, an additional budget for the CDA is a necessity. Do you agree with this Representation?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think your suggestion would be much appreciated not only by the Sponsor but by the CDA.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Will the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, support this humble Representation to lobby for an additional budget for the CDA? Considering that there are still unused appropriations in other agencies, a huge portion of that could be channeled to this agency. Will you assist, facilitate, and appeal to the leadership, especially to the Committee on Appropriations, for an increase in the budget of the CDA, at least P200 million, Your Honor, to start with?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I will promise my best to accede to the request of the Honorable Bravo for increasing the budgetary requirements of the CDA.

REP. BRAVO (A.). For that budget to go to the financing of the developmental function of the CDA.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, that is correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that assurance, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Before I end my interpellation, I would like to commend no other than our President for reinstating the Cooperative Development Authority from the DOF back to the Office of the President. I would like to encourage and appeal to our distinguished colleague to look into this matter, the budget of the CDA, and give a sufficient budget to the CDA so that once and for all, it can dutifully discharge its regulatory and developmental functions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, distinguished Sponsor, for the candid answers and for that assurance

that there will be an increase in the budget for the CDA for the calendar year 2017. Thank you very much.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Hon. Tony Bravo for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the honorable Gentleman from AKBAYAN, Rep. Tomasito "Tom" S. Villarín. I so move, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Honorable Villarín is recognized.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

Well, I have a 10-page questionnaire but due to the request, I will just condense my questions into an appeal. Well, this appeal is directed to the House and I join our colleagues from COOP-NATCCO that, indeed, to address rural poverty, we need organized cooperatives especially from among the rural poor, the fisherfolk, and the coconut sector.

So, I join my colleague in the COOP-NATCCO in manifesting that the appeal to increase the budget of the CDA be made, and the budget increase should also be commensurate to the needs of our rural poor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. So, there is nothing more that I could add except to say that I am one with you in the quest that we increase the budget of the CDA.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Honorable Villarín. Your point is well taken and I think, I speak on behalf of the CDA, that we will support your manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Dep. Minority Leader Tony Bravo of COOP-NATCCO for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Minority Leader, the Honorable Bravo, is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There being no other Member of the Minority who wishes to interpellate, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate on the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation on the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion to terminate the period of sponsorship and debate on the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority. Is there any objection (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D). Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to acknowledge the presence of the honorable Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines, Vice Pres. Leni Robredo. (*Applause*) With her are the housing family and key shelter agencies, namely: Sec. Gen. Angel G. Ojastro, III, HUDCC; Comm. Antonio M. Bernardo, HLURB; Gen. Mngr. Marcelino P. Escalada Jr., National Housing Authority; EVP Livia Alicia "June" R. Ramos, NHMFC; EVP Corazon G. Corpuz, HGC; President Ma. Ana R. Oliveros, SHFC; and Deputy Leo Acmad, MDTI, HDMP.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). To our honorable Vice Pres. Maria Leonor Robredo and other honorable guests, mainit po namin kayong tinatanggap dito sa Kamara de Representante. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of interpellation and debate. I move that we begin consideration of the budget of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Fifth District of Quezon City, Rep. Alfred D. Vargas, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Vargas is recognized for his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. VARGAS

REP. VARGAS. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is the honor and privilege of this Representation to defend the budget of all housing agencies and corporations. Much more, I am deeply honored by the presence of our former colleague from the Sixteenth Congress, and now Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines, Vice Pres. Leni Robredo. This Representation is now ready to answer any questions from the Members of this august Body.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Jose "Lito" L. Atienza Jr. from the Party-List BUHAY, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, mayroon lang nanggugulo. Give me a minute to tackle him.

Mr. Speaker, salamat po, also the Floor Leader and for the kind understanding of the Sponsor.

We would like to clarify certain matters knowing very well that the housing sector needs all the support that we can all give considering that housing is one of the basic needs of our people which have been left unattended. At this point, if we could only help the agency, we would do so, knowing very well that it is definitely lacking in resources.

As far as the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council is concerned, puwede ba pagsama-samahin na natin lahat ang housing sector or would we rather tackle it one by one, Mr. Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). With the indulgence of the Gentleman on the floor, the Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, we join the sentiment of the honorable Sr. Dep. Minority Leader. We now move that we consider the budgets of the following agencies: Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, the National Housing Authority, the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Social Housing Finance Corporation. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po. That should facilitate our interpellation so as to give the Vice President all the time to attend to other problems outside of the

budget, because we cannot even add a single centavo anyway to what she has already been given by the DBM. Liliwanagin ko na lang po ang mga ilang katanungan para naman makatulong tayo sa ating Bise Presidente na siya ngayon mayroong tungkulin kaugnay sa housing.

Mr. Speaker, the HUDCC is a coordinating body. It is supposed to take the place of a housing department considering that all agencies on housing are represented in this coordinating council. Nandiyan ang finance; nandiyan ang National Housing Authority; nandiyan ang regulatory. Kaya tatanungin ko ang ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, since this could be the best time to clarify this matter, would he be able to say and state before Congress that the HUDCC, as envisioned, is able to function effectively under the past, immediate past, and the present administration?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, as Representative of Quezon City, where I now reside in the Fifth District, 65 percent of the families are informal settlers. I would like to say that the HUDCC is facing many challenges for now and its situation is very far from ideal.

REP. ATIENZA. Itinanong ko iyon sapagkat ako ay nagtataka at nalulungkot kung minsan kapagka naririnig ko na mayroong mga panukala na bumuo pa tayo ng Department of Housing, para bagang kulang ang ating paraan para maasikaso ang problema ng pabahay. Sa katotohanan po, mayroon na tayong *de facto* Department of Housing with the creation of the HUDCC—nandiyan po ang production, nandiyan ang finance, nandiyan ang guarantee, nandiyan ang regulation, nandiyan ang mga importanteng bahagi ng bubuuing Department of Housing kung ito ay sasang-ayunan ng Kongreso at ng Senado. Subalit hindi po kailangan. Palakasin na lamang ang National Housing Authority, palakasin ang ating regulatory bodies, palakasin ang ating housing financing at sa palagay ko, mayroon na tayong Department of Housing na magagamit para naman matupad ang pangarap ng bawat Pilipino na magkaroon ng sariling tahanan.

Tinatanggap po ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na ang bawat Pilipino ay nananaginip na magkaroon siya ng sariling tahanan sa lalong madaling panahon, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tinatanggap din po ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na palaki ng palaki ang bilang ng mga nananaginip na mga Pilipino, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa ngayon ay mahigit limang milyon ang walang bahay at walang pagkakataon magkabahay. More than 80 percent of these are coming from the very poor sector na umaasa na lamang sa gobyerno sapagkat hindi sila makabibili ng kanilang tahanan sa presyo ng lupa at construction ngayon.

Therefore, the functions of the HUDCC as the *de facto* Department of Housing, together with the production arm which is the National Housing Authority, should really be given all the support that the government can give. Ang nakalulungkot po, and I would like to put this on record, as we have already stated it in the hearing, the National Housing Authority was given P31 billion ng nakaraang administrasyon. Tama po ba ito, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, P33 billion po.

REP. ATIENZA. So, that was P33 billion. Figure this out, my dear colleagues in Congress, for 2017 ay binigyan lang ito ng P12 billion. Binawasan po ang pondo ng production arm ng ating pamahalaan. Iyon po ba ay tama rin, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Dito po nakikita na natin na ang pagkukulang ay nasa pagbibigay ng pondo. Ang bahay na panaginip ng ating mga mahihirap malamang ay hindi po makakamit sa 2017. Huwag na huwag po nating sisihin ang sino man, lalung-lalo na ang mga isinisilang na sanggol at dumarating na mga Pilipino sa pagkukulang ng namamahala. Kung hindi po tayo magbibigay ng salapi para sa housing, maririnig na naman natin next year, kasi padami ng padami ang mga Pilipino, kasi anak kayo nang anak. Walang kinalaman ang anak at pagdami ng tao sa pagkukulang ng namamahala.

What can we do in Congress? Nothing, because we cannot increase, but we can state our position that we believe that housing should be given more emphasis by any administration. Nakapagtataka nga ang gobyernong walang damdamin, tinutukoy ko po ang nakaraang administrasyon, ang gobyernong walang pakialam ay handang gumastos ng P33 billion. Itong gobyernong may puso at nangangako ng pagbabago ay binawasan pa ang pondo.

Mr. Speaker, does the honorable Sponsor see any way that we in Congress can help to rectify this before we even pass the budget as a whole for 2017? Unless we do so, then Congress will become part of the parties to blame if our people are frustrated and even triply frustrated next year when they see less production in housing in our country.

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would

like to say that this Representation—I very much agree with the statements of the distinguished Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List. Totoo na mababa po ang pondo ng housing natin.

Just to explain, the comparative decrease in the budget for 2017 for the NHA is due to two major factors: first, the P4.3 billion final appropriations for the five-year implementation of the P50 billion housing fund or the Relocation and Housing Program for 104,000 informal settler families living along danger areas, wala na po ito ngayong 2017 dahil nagamit na. Second, the Housing Assistance Program amounting to P25.6 billion, this is for the construction of 87,000 permanent housing units for the typhoon Yolanda victims.

This Representation, at the proper time, as the Sponsor of this budget, will readily accept and support any proposed amendments to augment the funds of the housing agencies to address the current needs of our people for affordable housing.

Kailangan po—agree na agree po ako with the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker—kailangan po ng dagdag, and we agree that this budget is just a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, sino po ba ang may gawa nitong budget na ito; ang bagong administrasyon ba, o ang dating administrasyon?

REP. VARGAS. Ang bagong administrasyon na po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Itong mga estimate, itong mga justification, damdamin na po ba ito ng ating bagong Pangulo at ng ating Bise Presidente o ito ay ginawa pa ng nakaraang administrasyon?

REP. VARGAS. This budget was prepared by the previous administration, but it was finalized by the new administration in coordination with the DBM.

REP. ATIENZA. Am I to understand that the honorable Sponsor is accepting the responsibility of having deducted, or reduced greatly, the budget of the production arm of the government to provide housing for the very poor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, this Representation, like the Gentleman from BUHAY, ay naliliitan po talaga sa budget ng ating housing, ng ating National Shelter Program. This Representation, as the Sponsor of this budget this year, and hopefully in the years to come, will readily accept any support and proposed amendments to augment the funds.

I will do everything I can in my power, Mr. Speaker, in my responsibility over our Shelter Program—to augment its budget.

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to correct the impression that might have been created by the statement that this budget was prepared by the present administration, because in the hearings that we had on housing, it was stated very clearly, unequivocally by those representing the administration that this budget was not theirs, that it was prepared by the past administration.

Huwag po nating ibigay ang sisi sa kasalukuyan kung ang pagkukulang ay nasa nakaraan dahil ayaw ko naman maligaw ang ating perception kasi maliligaw din ang ating solusyon.

REP. VARGAS. I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you. Para po naman malinaw na hindi ito katha at hindi nilikha ng bagong pinuno ng housing, ang ating Bise Presidente, na sa palagay ko naman ay kung pagbibigyan na siya ang gumawa ng budget, baka times five ang budget na hihingin niya for the National Housing Authority and for the other housing agencies.

REP. VARGAS. I believe so too, Mr. Speaker, I agree.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po. Now, with regard to the possible reasons they have reduced the budget of the National Housing Authority, in the hearings also that we had, we pointed out very glaring monuments of government neglect. To name a few, we pointed out the conditions at the temporary housing along R-10 Boulevard in Tondo, Manila. We pointed out the Katuparan Housing Project also in Tondo. We pointed out the Happy Land area also in Tondo. We pointed out Parola 1, Parola 3, the old Bilibid Compound, and many other portions in Manila which are crying for government attention.

I am happy we had a short talk with the Vice President earlier, and she said she checked out the conditions in these areas. We would like to appreciate her immediate reaction that displays sensitivity. Iyon po ang kailangan. Inaamin naman ni Bise Presidente na talagang dapat pansinin ang kalagayan doon.

Mr. Speaker, the conditions prevailing in these areas that I mentioned, especially the temporary housing along the main avenue of R-10 Boulevard, are below human standards. Palagay ko po ay pati daga ay mahihirapang mabuhay doon kung bigla nating ilalagay doon sapagkat wala pong tubig, wala pong ilaw, putikan ang kapaligiran at ang dumi ay nagkalat. Ang mga tao, ang mga bata roon, ay nabubuhay araw-araw na nakalagay sa panganib ang kanilang kalusugan. We have to do something about this.

If Yolanda has already given us a respite, I am

pointing out to the National Housing Authority these areas in the city of Manila which require immediate attention, na kung hindi man natin mabigyan sila ng maganda at marangyang bahay, bigyan natin sila ng tubig, elektrisidad at malinis na kapaligiran. Iyan po ay hindi mahirap gawin. If the NHA would assign that to an NGO, I am sure it will be done, but the action must start from the government. Puwede po ba nating makunan ng garantiya ang kagalang-galang na Sponsor na bibigyan ng tubig, ilaw at malinis na kapaligiran itong mga nabanggit nating mga pabahay projects?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to confirm first with the housing agencies. Mr. Speaker, as answer to the question of the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, the answer is yes, and the agencies are now moving towards that direction. I would like to say that in line po ang naisip ninyo at ang mga programang balak gawin ng atin pong housing agencies.

REP. ATIENZA. Again, we would like to thank the honorable Sponsor for that assurance. Today, we will send word to these communities that indeed, finally, attention will be given them. Iyan po ay napakagandang balita sa isang problemang humihingi ng katuparan at ng aksyon ng pamahalaan in all these past years of neglect and total insensitivity.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. We truly appreciate that.

REP. ATIENZA. Now, shifting to another housing need, Mr. Speaker, we would now like to talk about the regulatory agency. During the hearings that we had, we asked the Housing Land Use Regulatory Board if they are in charge of supervising subdivisions, and they said, yes. I am asking now, is the HLURB also in charge of supervising condominium housing and condominium laws in the country?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Opo. So, with those questions answered clearly in the affirmative, we would like to put on the records of Congress that there are many violations of the HLURB regulations and violations of the law on housing, when the subdivision planners and owners changed the conditions prevailing after selling out all their units or all their lots in their particular projects. Ang tinuturan ko po lalong-lalo na, marami pong violations at ang nabibiktima ay ang walang kamalay-malay na consumer o house buyer pero ang pinaka-garapal na paglabag sa batas ay iyong garantiya na kapagka kayo ay bumili ng pabahay sa isang subdivision, magkakaroon kayo ng

palaruan, magkakaroon kayo ng parke, magkakaroon kayo ng open space, as provided for in the, or whatever you call that, the sales brochure that they use for selling and approved by the HLURB, as it is written there that this brochure is approved by the HLURB. Then, after selling all their units and their available land, the planners and the owners removed the open spaces, removed the playground, or removed the chapel space, and replaced them with more housing units for selling. Iyan po ay paglabag sa batas, hindi po ba?

REP. VARGAS. I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. Sorry po.

REP. ATIENZA. Tinatanong ko lang po, para naman po matala sa ating record na iyon po ay paglabag sa batas.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Therefore it should not be allowed.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. It is the job and task of the HLURB, Mr. Speaker, to see to it that what is written in the brochure when they are selling should be delivered to the owners of all condominium unit-buyers and home buyers in the subdivision. Hindi po iyong pagkatapos silang bumili ay nawala na po iyong magandang plano. Gobyerno po ang gumagarantiya diyan. Kapag sinabi ng brochure na approved by the HLURB under resolution so and so, the buyer feels secure, protektado iyong kanyang bibilhing investment dahil mayroon pong garantiya ang gobyerno. Kapagka nilabag ng developer at hindi umaksyon ang gobyerno, ang tao na naman ang agrabyado.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala pong magagawa si Juan dela Cruz kapagka iyong ipinangakong condominium unit na sinabing matatapos in two years, nagbabayad at na siya, tapos, na-postpone ng 10 years kaya wala pa siyang unit. Ang dami pong ganyan. You give me a little time, I will recite every single case swindling the consumer and the poor buyer.

Kapag bumibili ng bahay, whether it is a unit or an independent house, iyan po ay galing sa savings nila, lifetime savings. Iyan po ay pinag-iipunan sa abroad ng kanyang asawa o anak na nagta-trabaho, tapos ibabayad doon sa developer pero hindi po naman nadi-deliver. Iyon po ba ay pinapansin ng HLURB?

REP. VARGAS. Definitely, Mr. Speaker. Just to express that I agree with the Gentleman from BUHAY, because I, myself, have a personal experience with this. Noon kumuha po ako ng condominium unit doon po sa isang probinsiya, sinabi po fully-furnished, ano po, pero DVD player lang at saka sofa ang aking nakuha.

Rest assured we have commitment from the HLURB that the HLURB recognizes your concerns as legit and we have commitment that the HLURB is investigating and taking action on this matter. I asked the head of the HLURB just now and he said that in a matter of two weeks, they can send, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, a report on this, on their action.

REP. ATIENZA. Yes, we would request on record that we be given a listing of the cases that they have acted on and cases that they should have filed, dahil kailangan po idemanda ang mga developer na ito para madala. Kung hindi po naman, kaawa-awa tayong lahat. Bumibili tayo ng bahay na akala natin mayroong katotohanan, iyon pala ay hindi matutupad sapagkat tumalikod iyong developer sa kanyang pangako na inaprubahan ng HLURB. Puwede po ba nating asahan iyon?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Sana bago po mag-a singko, dahil kung hindi po, si-single-out ko iyong HLURB dito sa approval ng ating budget. Nakaka-frustrate po ito, at gusto ko namang ibigay sa lahat ng mga nagrereklamo sa opisina...

REP. VARGAS. Did I hear it right, Mr. Speaker, bago mag-October 5? Let me confirm lang po.

REP. ATIENZA. Maraming salamat po doon sapagkat malaking bagay iyong aksyon na ibibigay natin sa mga reklamo at proteksyon na rin ng karapatan ng mga mamimili.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the HLURB is committed to submit the report to you before October 5.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, with these answers and responses placed on our records, we would like to assure the Gentleman Sponsor of the Bill, all our continuing support for the housing needs to be fulfilled by this government. Kailangang-kailangan po natin ang pabahay, dahil iyan ang panaginip ng bawat Pilipino. Kung ang ibang lahi, ang ibang bansa ay mayroong ibang panaginip, ang panaginip po ng Pilipino ay magkaroon ng sariling tahanan na hindi naman nabibilad sa panloloko at pandaraya ng mga

nagsasamantala sa walang kamalay-malay. Iyon po namang ating mga lubos na mahihirap, those belonging to the real genuinely poor who are dependent on the government and the financing of the government, we will also share in looking for ways and means to expand the coverage of socialized housing in our country.

So with that, we would like to thank the Majority Leader, the honorable Sponsor, and the Chair for this opportunity to interact with the Sponsor of budget of the National Housing Authority and the housing sector of the country which we, again, reiterate is not getting the kind of support from this national appropriations measure which is soon to pass, na hindi po sila kasali sa biyaya ng tamang pananalapi.

Maraming-maraming salamat po. Thank you for this opportunity.

REP. VARGAS. Maraming salamat po.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. I move that we recognize the honorable Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, the women's rights champion from the Party-List GABRIELA for her interpellation. I so move, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Arlene D. Brosas is recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang umaga po sa lahat. Magandang umaga, Mr. Sponsor. Will you yield to some of my questions regarding the housing problem in question? Mr. Sponsor, will you yield to my questions?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am ready to answer any questions from the Lady from GABRIELA.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mayroon pong P1,149,982,000 allotted for building community facilities for existing relocation sites. Paano po itinatakda ang pondo na ito at aling mga relocation sites ang makikinabang sa sinabing pondo?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to confirm the data with the housing agency.

Mr. Speaker, I have here with me the complete list of the 18 existing resettlement sites, the summary of infrastructure components and funding by site matrix which this Representation would be glad to show to the honorable interpellator.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Thank you. May nakalaang P72 million para sa Housing Assistance Program for Calamity Victims sa permanent housing ng Presentacion Village Resettlement Project. Anong klaseng assistance po ito?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, can you give me a few moments to confirm the specific details. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I have here with me a document saying the Housing Program for Calamity Victims for Presentacion Village Resettlement Project for 300 beneficiaries has a total cost of P72 million, aside from the construction of housing units.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Puwede po bang pakiliwanag ang relocation assistance na may P129.6 million, sa paano pong porma ito at saang relocation sites ito mapupunta?

REP. VARGAS. Relocation assistance amounting to P129.6 million will be allocated to 7,200 families residing within the three-meter waterway easement in the priority areas declared by the DPWH, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. During the two dialogues held between the relocatees and the concerned agencies, namely, the NHA and HUDCC, a lot of issues were put forward by the residents when they were forcibly evicted from their homes. Perhaps, to soften their resistance, they were promised that housing units were already reserved for them, but upon arriving in the relocation sites, they found out that there was no electricity and water supply. Some have to wait for years while others remain without these utilities up to now. Is there something being done to remedy this situation now?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, per my meetings with the new General Manager of the NHA, he has now assigned a task force to investigate all, not only the project that you mentioned but all concerns similar to what you have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Plus, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, problema po ng mga tao sa relocation sites ngayon ay sinisingil sila ng tubig at kuryente; at kapag hindi na sila nakabayad, hindi sila binibigyan din ng pagkakataon na magkaroon ng tubig at kuryente dahil kailangan muna nilang magbayad sa NHA ng kanilang amortisasyon bago sila muling mabigyan ng basic services tulad ng tubig at kuryente. Iyon po ay sana masolusyunan ng NHA dahil iyon po ay basic na kahilingan ng mga mamamayan, lalong-lalo na sa relocation.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Your concerns—that particular concern of yours is very legitimate and the NHA will revisit the policies and will investigate those cases. From my conversation a while ago with the Vice President, we have the firm commitment that the whole National Shelter Program, headed by HUDCC, will address these problems.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Another issue that came up concerns the substandard materials used to build the housing units. The galvanized iron sheets are of poor quality. You can actually cut them even without using the proper shears and the water pipes leak. This shows that the contractors probably cut corners during construction.

Will the NHA hold them accountable? Iyong mga nakaraang kontrata, sino po ba ang gumagawa ng kontrata sa pagitan ng relocatees at NHA? Ang NHA po ba o mismong mga developers?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, mayroon pong terms of reference where the NHA is guided by the DPWH, but the performance is under review and investigation by the NHA.

REP. BROSAS. Under review. On to my next question, as of December 2015, ayon sa website ng NHA, mayroong P3.14 billion na nakolekta ang NHA mula sa mga beneficiaries. Saan po mapupunta ang halagang ito?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, it goes back to the corporate fund of the NHA and ploughed back to another housing project.

REP. BROSAS. Magkano po ang taunang kita ng NHA, halimbawa, noong 2013, 2014, 2015?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a few moments to confirm the data.

Mr. Speaker, I have here with me the income statement and it says here that the Net Profit and Subsidies for 2015 is P11 billion; the subsidy is P10 billion and the actual profit is P334 million. For 2016, the Net Profit and Subsidies is P35 billion and Subsidy from the national government is P34 billion and the net profit is P367 million.

REP. BROSAS. So, tumataas po iyong taunang kita ng NHA. Bilang isang korporasyon, nag-i-invest po ba ang NHA at ano-ano po iyong mga investments na pinapasok ng NHA?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, wala pong mandate sa investment. Umiikot po iyan sa housing.

REP. BROSAS. So, bumabalik sa housing?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Sa mga nagdaang taon, higit sa pagbibigay ng serbisyo, hinangad ng NHA na kumita. Sa kalagayang marami ang ating mga kababayan na halos hindi na maitawid ang pang-araw-araw na pangtustos sa pagkain, kinakaharap nila ang banta na mawalan muli ng tahanan.

Mayroon na naman po tayong ilang bilang ng evictions at demolitions na gagawin. Doon po nangangamba ang ating mga kababayan. Patunay dito ang malaking bilang ng mga hindi nakababayad sa buwanang amortisasyon at nakatatanggap ng ilang beses ng liham ng pagbabanta. Sa karamihan, relatibong mababa nga naman ang P200 kada buwan, kasi ito po iyong binabayaran nila pero ang emphasis dito ay nasa sa salitang “relatibo.” Sa karamihan sa mga nandito siguro, hindi ito masyadong malaki, kakayanin natin iyon, pangkape lang iyon o di kaya kung ano pa man, pero sa katulad ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan, mahihirapan po sila.

Take for example, si Nanay Melay na nakatira sa Camarin Residences, isang in-city relocation sa Caloocan. Ang asawa niya po ay nagta-trabaho bilang kontraktwal sa Shaw Boulevard at kumikita ng P484 sa isang araw. Tingnan natin iyong kanyang pinagkakagastusan: Ang pamasaha balikan ng asawa niya ay nagkakahalaga ng P150; ang tatlong kain ng asawa niya sa kantina ay umaabot ng P195; ang gastos nila sa pagkain sa bahay ay P100; ang baon ng tatlong anak nila ay P50; ang tubig at kuryente ay P20. Sa isang araw, kung susumahin, ay gumagastos sila ng P515 at ito ay tipid na. Ang mga anak nila ay naglalakad lang, walang service. Kapag ang 515 itinatap sa 484, liability pa po iyon. Paano nila mababayaran ang sinasabi nating “napakaliit” na P200 kada buwan na amortisasyon? Ito ay in-city relocation; paano pa iyong nasa Bocaue, Bulacan, halimbawa, tapos, sa Quezon City nagta-trabaho, hindi ba? Magkano iyon? Nasa P120 na kaagad ang one-way na pamasaha.

Kahit saang anggulo tingnan, talo ang mga maralita, talo ng ilang ulit. Una ay iyong paalisin sila sa tinitirahan nila, dahil relocatees nga sila, na lugar na kung saan sila kumukuha ng ikabubuhay; pangalawa, sapilitan silang nilipat palayo. Binigyan nga ng pabahay, hindi naman nila mabayaran. Iba pang issue iyong kalagayan ng mga pabahay na ito. Paano nga naman mababayaran ng maluwag mula sa iyong kalooban, kung ikaw ay na-relocate, sa loob ng 30 years ang isang bahay kung wala pang isang dekada ay sira na, tumutulo ng iyong bubong, umaapaw na iyong poso negro? Minsan, ang isyu pa nila ay bumabaha sa kanilang mga lugar.

Inamin naman ng GM na marami talagang mali sa nakaraang administrasyon ng NHA, at totoo na nangyari ang mga ito bago pa siya nasa posisyon.

REP. VARGAS. Opo.

REP. BROSAS. Kami sa GABRIELA ay magbabantay upang ang mga ito ay hindi na maulit, at patuloy na nananawagan na itaguyod ng NHA ang serbisyo, at hindi negosyo, kasabay ng paninindigan namin, kasama ng mga maralita, ng katiyakan sa paninirahan.

Kaugnay din po nito, hinihiling namin sa NHA ang isang diyalogo kasama ang mga relocatees. Nagpaabot na po kami ng sulat sa tanggapan ng ating bagong GM, matagal na pong kumakatok ang mga relocatees sa mga nakaraang administrasyon pero sa tingin nila, sila ay hindi naririnig. Kaya umaasa po ang mga relocatees sa kasalukuyang administrasyon na mapakinggan ang kanilang tinig, matingnan ang kanilang kalagayan at mabigyan ng kagyat na aksyon ang kanilang mga pangangailangan.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. VARGAS. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from the KABAYAN Party-List, the Hon. H. Harry L. Roque Jr., for his interpellation. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Harry Roque is recognized.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker; thank you, Floor Leader.

Mr. Speaker, I premise my line of interpellation on the fact that housing is a human right. It is provided for in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the obligation of the State is to take all progressive steps in order to realize this right to housing.

My first question, Mr. Speaker, is, considering the nature of state obligation to take all necessary steps to provide housing to our citizens, what is the total percentage of the current total budget allotted for this year for socialized housing? This is the combined budget of the NHA and the amount of financing that is available to the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Social Housing Finance Corporation.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is less than 1 percent.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Now, ...

REP. VARGAS. No—less than 0.4 percent, I stand corrected—let me correct myself, Mr. Speaker, it is 0.4 percent of the national budget.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Now, with a measly 0.4 percent allotted to socialized housing, given the state obligation to take progressive steps, Mr. Speaker, may I know from the Sponsor if he is of the opinion that this 0.4 percent of the budget is sufficient to discharge our obligation to take progressive steps for the realization of this right to housing.

REP. VARGAS. It is not sufficient, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). In fact, not only is 0.4 percent not sufficient and therefore, a clear evidence of the state's failure to fulfill its state obligation, what is sad too is, we have actually used up the amount of P50 billion a few years ago to fast-track the building of socialized housing units. Is this not correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, out of the P50 billion, P32 billion po ay used na, and the remaining fund is being reviewed by the DBM.

REP. ROQUE (H.). So, is it not safe to conclude, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that for the year 2017 and beyond, we have really failed in our duty to allot sufficient resources for the purpose of realizing this human right to housing?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, this Representation agrees and subscribes to the observation that this current budget is very, very small, honestly. With my meetings and my discussions in the National Shelter Program, I think it is important to know that with this budget that we have now, in the NEP, we can immediately address the housing needs of those affected by calamities in order that the situation and living conditions of the people may be normalized and we will be able to have the families living in acceptable and suitable housing units.

At the proper time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that this Representation, as the Sponsor of the budget of the housing agencies, will readily accept, support, and actually push for any proposed amendments to augment the funds of the housing agencies to address the current need of our people for affordable housing.

REP. ROQUE (H.). I am happy to hear that because that is my intention, at the right time, to ensure that the state is not in breach of its obligation as far as the right to housing is concerned.

Before I end, two parochial concerns: may I know from the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, if the housing agencies will proceed with the clearing of areas in the perimeter of south-bound railways in the province of Laguna?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Now, may I also know from the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, why it is that in the city of Muntinlupa, and I was a resident of Muntinlupa for more than 20 years, the residents who were relocated from the railroads areas were relocated to a site and although they were given respective spaces to build their homes thereat, they have not been awarded title to their land, but they have only been given usufruct?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. VARGAS. May I request for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 11:33 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:33 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, yes, it is true na usufruct pa rin po but now, they are in the process of exploring the possibility of awarding the title to the people themselves.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, I asked this question because I campaigned in that neighborhood not once but twice, and in both instances, I promised them that as a human rights advocate, we will push, if given the mandate to serve in Congress, to realize the dreams of these individuals to own and have title to the land that they possess right now.

My question is, how soon will their dreams of owning the respective land area be achieved, Mr. Speaker?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I request for a one-minute suspension of the session, please.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 11:34 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:35 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, we have a commitment from the new General Manager of NHA, Sir Jun Escalada, that by 2017, the Gentleman will be able to address his concern.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Yes, just for the record, Mr. Speaker, may I ask from Sponsor the name of the area involved again.

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, it is Southville 3.

REP. ROQUE (H.). That is correct. That is the area where I was twice during the campaign period, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to have been given this reply. I will return to Southville 3 with the good news that in 2017, their long-desired dream of owning their land may, in fact, happen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I end my interpellation with an appeal that housing is not just a state obligation that must be fulfilled. Public housing and socialized housing can also be the economic stimulus that we require for economic development. This is certainly the lesson that we can learn from our neighboring countries like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Singapore. They poured tremendous public resources to public housing, not only because it is a state obligation but because they know that when we invest in public housing, there will be jobs for carpenters, manufacturers, and so on and so forth.

So, it is in this light, Mr. Speaker, that I have the honor to move that we terminate deliberations on the budget of the following housing agencies: Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, National Housing Authority, National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation, and the Social Housing Finance Corporation. This is a motion on behalf of the Minority.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMERO. On behalf of the Majority, can we ask for a few minutes of suspension of the session.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 11:37 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:38 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of the budgets of the following agencies: budgets of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, the National Housing Authority, the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation, and the Social Housing Finance Corporation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none, the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the consideration of House Bill No. 3408 or the 2017 General Appropriations Bill.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*)

The Chair hears none, the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 30, dated September 30, 2016.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

roll call shows that 156 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). With 156 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we reconsider House Bill No. 3408.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a motion to reconsider...

REP. ROMERO. To resume the consideration, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). ... to resume the consideration...

REP. ROMERO. ... of House Bill No. 3408 or the 2017 General Appropriations Bill.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

HOUSING AGENCIES

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of the budgets of the following agencies: the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council; the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board; the National Housing Authority; the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation; and the Social Housing Finance Corporation.

For this purpose, we recognize the Vice Chairman, the Hon. Alfred D. Vargas.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none, the motion is approved.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Representative from the Third District of Quezon, Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Minority Leader, the Hon. Danny Suarez is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minority interposes no more questions on the proposed budgets of the following agencies: Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council; Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board; National Housing Authority; National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation; and Social Housing Finance Corporation. We would like to terminate, on behalf of the Minority, any interpellation on the proposed budgets of these five offices.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation on the budgets of the following agencies: Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council; Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board; National Housing Authority; National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation; and Social Housing Finance Corporation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budgets of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council; Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board; National Housing Authority; National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation; and Social Housing Finance Corporation.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. (*Applause*)

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the budget of the Office of the Vice President,

and for that purpose, recognize the honorable Vice Chairman, Rep. Alfred D. Vargas.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Vargas is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, may I amend the motion. I move to recognize the honorable Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Karlo Nograles is now recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Thank you Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Dep. Majority Leader.

We have the proposed obligation budget of the Office of the Vice President for fiscal year 2017 in the amount of P433.547 million and we are ready to answer any questions from the Members of the House of the Representatives.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Representative from the Third District of Quezon, Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The honorable Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo Suarez, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Chair of the Committee of Appropriations yield to some minor clarificatory questions?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. It will be my honor and privilege.

REP. SUAREZ. Is the distinguished Vice President, our honored guest today, comfortable with the proposed Budget for 2017?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, she is, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. On behalf of the Minority, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, we do not have any more questions to raise on the proposed budget of the Office of the Vice President.

I so move. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Office of the Vice President. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate for the budget of the Office of the Vice President.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chairs hears none, the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 3408.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chairs hears none, the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMERO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session until 1:00 p.m. today.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended until one o'clock in the afternoon today.

It was 12:02 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:07 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 3408, and

for that purpose, the Secretary General be directed read only the title of said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are in the period of interpellation and debate on House Bill No. 3408, and I move that we take up the budget of the Climate Change Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. BONDOC. For the purpose of the defense of the budget of the Climate Change Commission, I move that we recognize our honorable Vice Chairperson, the Hon. Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Honorable Malanyaon is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I ask for a few minutes' suspension of the session for a chance for the technical staff and Sponsor to arrange themselves.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 1:08 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:17 p.m. the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the representatives from the Climate Change Commission. We have Sec. Emmanuel M. De Guzman, Comm. Noel Antonio V. Gaerlan, Comm. Frances Veronica D. Victorio, and Asst. Sec. Romell Antonio Cuenca, the Deputy Executive Director of the Climate Change Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). To the named guests, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. The Hon. Joey Salceda of the Second District of Albay will be sponsoring the budget of the Climate Change Commission.

I move for his recognition, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Salceda is recognized.

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, this Representation is ready to answer questions.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from the Party-List COOP-NATCCO, Rep. Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D for his interpellations. So moved, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished colleague, Sponsor, yield to some interpellation ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ... from this Representation?

REP. SALCEDA. To a fellow Bicolano, yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

How much is the proposed budget of the Climate Change Commission for 2017?

REP. SALCEDA. It is P87 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). P87 ?

REP. SALCEDA. P86.361, Mr. Speaker. I rounded it off.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Billion?

REP. SALCEDA. Million, M.

REP. BRAVO (A.). And how much was the 2016 Budget?

REP. SALCEDA. It was P237.952 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). 2?

REP. SALCEDA. 37. P238 million.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Million?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, what has the Climate Change Commission done with the People's Survival Fund amounting to P2 billion?

REP. SALCEDA. Actually, Mr. Speaker, the People's Survival Fund is now about P1 billion and then there's another P1 billion, so the balance stands at P2 billion. Actually, it is going through a lot of what you might call "consultations" with the affected stakeholders. But definitely, Mr. Speaker, there are plans in terms of its utilization. In short, Mr. Speaker, it is still complete.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Can we be furnished, can this humble Representation be furnished with details of that report?

REP. SALCEDA. It is still P2 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Next question, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I have read the article of Tulfo which says that the Executive Director, Emmanuel De Guzman, goes around with 14 bodyguards and travelled for two months abroad with his family when he became a Commissioner thereon. Is this true?

REP. SALCEDA. That is not true, Your Honor. Actually, I already conferred with him and I know him personally, Your Honor, because he is a well-known official of the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva and probably one of the most distinguished in this line or domain of expertise, Your Honor. I could very well tell you and assure the Gentleman that there is no such

thing. What he has are two contracted personnel who serve as his aides whom you call bodyguards, but no bodyguards from the PSPO. As the PNP records would show, Your Honor, there are no PSPO assigned to him, Your Honor. There are only two aides contracted that will essentially support, Your Honor, his own physical safety, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, completely you deny, that this news that has been made public is not true.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, it simply means that we are trying to correct the accuracy, Your Honor, of certain numerical assertions. One, there are no 14, there are only two. And second, Your Honor, the last time he went around and went out of the country was for the, where I was also present, Your Honor, signing of the Paris Agreement in Paris last December, Your Honor. So in that sense, Your Honor, it may have been colorfully described, Your Honor, if that is the least, the best that we can say, Your Honor, about those allegations.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much for that clarification.

My next question is, because we received reports that prior to the Duterte administration, there were many travels made by the Climate Change Commission, often resulting in unnecessary waste of taxpayers' money. That is why, I am pointing this out because, you know, it is the people's money that is being used for—as made to public, it is the people's money that is being used for travel.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, I understand the basis for your concern, and I think it is legitimate that they must account for that money, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So the same, I would like to request a summary report relative to that issue so that it will be clear to us also.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, with respect to the utilization of the P2- billion People's Survival Fund, yes, we will submit that within the day, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that assurance that you are going to submit a report.

Corollary to the previous question that I propounded, is it true that the Vice Chair of the Climate Change Commission cancelled the Climate Change Commission MOA with the Philippine Airlines and appointed a preferred travel agency of the Vice Chair?

REP. SALCEDA. May I check that, Your Honor, with ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). Can you please confer if it is true or not?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, because in this day and age, there is stiff competition in the airline business. There was before—how would you call it? It cannot be a MOA, Your Honor. It must be a contract with PAL for the travel requirements of the Climate Change Commission, certainly, because of our participation and, in fact, the leadership of the Philippines was recognized in the world with respect to climate change. But, Your Honor, the status is that they look for other agencies where the prices are cheaper. So, in that sense, Your Honor, you are correct but I do not know whether it is a MOA.

It is a contract, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, but they are studying again the idea of returning to PAL apparently because the pricing of PAL, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. To be exact, PAL provided a credit line for the Climate Change Commission which was not renewed.

REP. BRAVO (A.). How much? I am asking this, Mr. Chair, Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. SALCEDA. The credit line, Mr. Speaker, is P500,000.

REP. BRAVO (A.). P500,000.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I am asking this because we understand that this preferred travel agency charges P200,000 for a roundtrip economy class trip to Europe, whereas, purchased directly from the airline, it only amounts to P70,000. That is the report that reached this Representation.

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, the status is, or the correct—what happened, Mr. Speaker, is that the travel orders sometimes comes in very late and, therefore, they are forced, they are compelled to buy tickets at market rates because of the duty we have imposed on them to represent the Philippines; but most of these credit lines anyway, Mr. Speaker, are for local requirements with respect to the PAL, sorry. But travel authority, because they are actually an office attached to the Office of the President.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Along that line, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ...may this humble

Representation also request full disclosure on that particular issue.

REP. SALCEDA. Very well, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, it may take time because those records are not here. But, with respect to the utilization of the P2 billion People's Survival Fund which has not been used, Mr. Speaker, definitely, we can issue a certification with respect to its status.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. SALCEDA. Can you give us one week, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BRAVO (A.). One week and you are assuring that a report will be submitted.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, all the records with respect to the travel or the travel expenditures of the Climate Change Commission.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that assurance, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Finally, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I would like also to request the administration division to submit all the communications pertaining to the Climate Change Plan.

REP. SALCEDA. The National Climate Change Action Plan, Mr. Speaker? There are several levels, Mr. Speaker. There are local climate change action plans, so, which in particular, Your Honor? All plans, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. BRAVO (A.). The previous plan and the succeeding plan, because we know that the administration changed.

REP. SALCEDA. To be exact, Mr. Speaker, are you talking about the National Climate Change Action Plan of 2017? Mr. Speaker, our existing plan is up to 2030. So, we will submit that by Monday, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you.

REP. BRAVO (A.). That is all. I rest my case. Thank you very much.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from SAGIP Party-List, Rodante D. Marcoleta, for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Marcoleta is recognized.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, honorable Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, good afternoon, my neighbor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I know that the honorable Sponsor would easily agree with these premises that based on the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, disasters from 1990 to 2006 cost P20 billion a year or about 0.5 percent of our country's gross domestic product.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor; 0.51, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you.

Damage to properties averages about P4.6 billion in the past 30 years.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Sponsor is not aware of the disasters or the effects of the disasters in his own province when he served as the Governor of Albay.

REP. SALCEDA. Even when I was Congressman, Your Honor, I would fight climate change every day.

REP. MARCOLETA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, it was he who said that Albay is the Vatican of disasters.

REP. SALCEDA. But we are also the capital of climate change adaptation, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor, Your Honor.

And of course, of the 10 cities in the world most exposed to natural hazards, eight are in the Philippines. Of the 100 cities with greatest exposure to natural hazards, 21 are in our country. That was the report made to us, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. I remember that report, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Given all these facts and

admissions, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, do you think that the budget allotted for climate change, either mitigation, preparation, adaptation or anything that relates to climate change is enough to address the potential damages that climate change will have in our country?

REP. SALCEDA. It is significant already, Your Honor, but it is not enough. As you can see, Your Honor, if you allow this tagging of the budgets, because we have adopted the whole budget approach, like for example, when you build a better-drainage canal, that is considered as climate change adaptation. It reduces the risk to life as well as to livelihood, Your Honor, and therefore, it is small with respect to the budget of the Climate Change Commission as regards its performance of its mission, that it needs capacity building among all local governments so they can prepare their own local climate change action plans. In that sense, Your Honor, yes, it is insufficient.

REP. MARCOLETA. So, it is insufficient. And given the fact that this is a problem that will probably be in the minds of our leaders for the next few years, the budget of P210,406,000, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is, I think, a pittance.

REP. SALCEDA. A pity, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. ...when we relate it to the magnitude of disasters that can probably wreak in this country.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. So, if it is not enough, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it is incumbent upon us to do something about this, because we believe that human activities, practically all human activities, are affected by disasters, more specifically those are done outside or outdoors.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, the Climate Change Commission will willingly accept all the help that could, especially from this Congress, with respect to its performance of duties, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. So, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, right from the person who has a lot of experience about climate change—flooding, lava flows, storms, typhoons and all these, you ask it and Albay has it.

What can the Sponsor now tell us about the unlimited budget? What can we do in order that we can sufficiently meet the potentials of climate change in this country?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Your Honor, if we are

talking about what should be prioritized, it is really helping the local governments comply with the requirements of our laws, which is really to prepare their own local climate change action plans with respect to mitigation as well as to adaptation.

As you said, Your Honor, some—a lot of our LGUs, let us say, at least 1,500, Your Honor, I think, what may be done is really to provide, at least, a million for capacity building for all these LGUs, so they can complete their compliance in terms of the local climate change action plans. In short, it is about P1.5 billion, but, definitely, Your Honor, at the appropriate time, we will willingly consider any concerted effort from this House in order to boost the capacity of the Climate Change Commission in confronting as well as in responding effectively to climate change.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it is good that you mentioned added capacities of the LGUs because I think given the fact that they are in the forefront of these calamities that regularly visit our country, I think they should be given enough support. As you know, the Philippines loses as much as 1.1 percent of our GDP each year to disasters higher than the estimated 0.6 percent of our APEC countries. Do you admit that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SALCEDA. Can you repeat the numbers, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. It is about 1.1 percent of our GDP each year. That is the effect of disasters in our country. And if you compare it with the 0.6 percentage in our, I mean, our neighbors, the effect is too much for us, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, it definitely reduces our growth potential and it increases the number of poor people, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to have stated all these facts and for us to recognize the problem that faces our country.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, Your Honor.

REP. MARCOLETA. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from BUHAY Party-List, Cong. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Floor Leader, and thank you for allowing us to meet the Gentleman from Albay.

REP. SALCEDA. Same here.

REP. ATIENZA. May I ask a question first before we start the dialogue. Ang nakita ko po sa ating schedule ay dapat si Congresswoman Malanyaon ang nagdedepensa ng budget ng Climate Change.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Now, I see a good-looking Gentleman before me.

REP. SALCEDA. She is my friend and definitely, Your Honor, it is really because we wanted to enhance the—because of the experience, as well as, of course, my background, having been the first Asian Chairman of the Green Climate Fund, which is the principal financing mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Therefore, Your Honor, it is an effort on my part in order to—the discussion will be fruitful and, therefore, we can move forward to the agenda of the country with respect to climate change.

REP. ATIENZA. We welcome, Mr. Speaker, the change in the cast, and Manny Pacquiao coming to the forefront, Manny Pacquiao of the climate change situation in the country, having been a Governor himself, and having been very active in getting the national attention focused on our situation as a climate change possible, or rather, victim now.

Siya po ay gumawa ng mga hakbang sa kanyang kakayahan bilang Gobernador upang ang ating bansa, lalo na iyong kanyang probinsiya, ay mailigtas sa maaaring malalaking mga sakuna na magiging bunga ng ating kapabayaan.

So, I would like to ask the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker: The Climate Change Commission today as it is now set up, would the Gentleman describe it as in a better condition than in the past administration or in a similar situation?

REP. SALCEDA. I would say that it is in a fighting capacity, Your Honor. It probably would be on the second title of Manny Pacquiao, out of the eighth,

Your Honor. In short, Your Honor, it is growing and evolving as an organism with respect to its role in national development.

In short, Mr. Speaker, it is going through a transition simply because, one, we have a transition in the administration; second, Mr. Speaker, their budgets were cut, and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, in that sense, it is lower. But, Mr. Speaker, I would still say, by the quality of the people we have in the Climate Change Commission, it is in a fighting capacity.

REP. ATIENZA. I asked this very basic question, Mr. Speaker, because in the past administration, they did not give much importance or relevance to the functions of this Commission, to the point where I do not think, the Chairman, who is the President, am I right in my assumption?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. The President is the Chairman of ...

REP. ATIENZA. The President of the Philippines who is supposed to be Chairman of the Commission has not met, or if he did meet, probably, once in six years.

REP. SALCEDA. Twice, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Twice.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Twice in six years. Is that giving it any importance or relevance in his administration? I would say not.

Kung hindi po ninyo mini-meeting ang Komisyon ay wala po kayong wastong pagpapahalaga. Mabuti pa siguro iyong mga ibang mga maliliit na mga tanggapan ay nakapupulong ng Pangulo noon. E hindi miniting kung hindi dalawang beses lamang. At noong tayo ay nag-uisap ng budget ng Climate Change noong mga panahong na iyon, dito po sa Sixteenth Congress, iyon po ang naging napakalaking kakulangan ng mga nagpapatakbo ng komisyon, sapagkat inamin nila sa aking pagtatanong kung nakakausap nila ang Pangulo ng bansa who is the Chairman. And they admitted to me, noong panahong iyon ay minsan lang. Ngayon, dalawang beses pala.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We are willing to accept the 100-percent improvement of the past President being Chairman, but today, we have a President who has initially said that he would not honor the Paris Agreement on the adjusted climate change principles or plan of action, as you call it. Palagay ba ninyo ay

mimiting kayo ng Pangulong Duterte o pababayaan na lamang ang komisyon na magtrabaho on their own?

REP. SALCEDA. I am estopped by my own personal position on that, Mr. Speaker. but I guess, Mr. Speaker, that the Climate Change Commission, as it is constituted as the official representative of the Philippines to the conference of parties, Mr. Speaker, will seek—because as of now, Mr. Speaker, we probably have reached already the threshold of 55 percent of total emissions. We have already signed on. But all of them have signed on, the U.S. have signed on but it is as executive treaty, India, China, and I guess, what is remaining is the E.U. China signed with a lot of reservation, caveats, provided they are funded. India, the same, they said, we ratify the treaty with caveat, Mr. Speaker.

In that sense, Mr. Speaker, I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is that ample policy space for us to recommend to the President to change his mind so that we can sign, ratify and partake of the benefits of the global agreement in order to reduce emissions as well as adapt to the impacts of climate change with caveats, Mr. Speaker. In short, they call it caveats, in other words, you ratify with caveat, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We accept the assurances of the Gentleman from Albay, coming from him that he is most convinced of the climate change research and climate change projections, which put the Philippine Islands in the direct path of whatever is going to happen to the planet Earth. But we need to convince the President about how you feel, how we feel and how the world now feels—ay tama iyon, para po naman huwag naman magmatigas na “I will not honor the agreements in Paris”, because iyan ay parang gawa lang ng mga mayayamang bansa.” Iyon po ang narinig ko e, and that worried me and I said, kung iyong nakaraang Climate Change Commission hindi naging masyadong epektibo ay lalo na itong magiging Climate Change Commission ngayon, rather. Baka hindi bigyan ng pagkakataong makapagtrabaho ito.

By the way, how do you—how do they make decisions in the Commission? Is this being run, if the President is not present, or the President is not interested, but is it already a created commission with definitive mandated functions? How do they function? Are they making decisions on their own collegially or is it being led by a single person?

REP. SALCEDA. It is like ...

REP. ATIENZA. How do they make their decisions in this Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. It is like the NEDA, Your Honor.

The NEDA has its own executive director, but the Chairman of the NEDA is actually the President. In short, Your Honor, there is a Secretariat, the people behind me, and they regularly meet. And actually, Your Honor, the basis for decisions of the Commission is science-based, Your Honor. In short, Your Honor, they consult scientists and they consult the affected vulnerable communities. And, Your Honor, once a certain position has been taken, there is clearance from the President with respect, for example, to the negotiating position, we bring to the conference of parties. For this year, it is in Marrakesh, Morocco, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, what the Gentleman from Albay is saying is that decisions are made, or rather, recommendations are made by the Commission, am I right to assume that? But, who in particular in the Commission makes the recommendation or the decision to recommend at all? Ito po ba ay ginagawa lang ng isang tao o mayroon ho silang sistema where every member of the Commission is given a chance to participate?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes. Actually, Your Honor, all the resolutions are sent to the President for his signature.

REP. ATIENZA. I ask this question, Mr. Speaker, simply because I consider the set-up of the Commission as very critical to its functions.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi pupwede po na ito ay pamunuan ng isang tao kung ang ating binuo ay isang komisyon. Ang kailangan po ay mayroon pong contribution ang—ilan po ba ang miyembro ng Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. There are three Commissioners and four including the President, but the members of the Commission are—maraming secretaries kayo hindi po ba?—there is one Vice Chair and two Commissioners and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, including—I do not know why there is no representative from Congress but—among letter is Z? There are virtually, 26.

REP. ATIENZA. Ilan po?

REP. SALCEDA. Twenty six po ang nasa Commission per se, but what we have are members po ng—the Commission shall be composed of the President, three Commissioners, and the Commission shall have the following Advisory Board composed of almost letter Z plus AA, so 27 members, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, there are 27 members in the Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. Advisory Board, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Ilan po iyong mga Commissioners na officially recognized as such?

REP. SALCEDA. Tatlo po.

REP. ATIENZA. Tatlo.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon po bang tatlong iyon ay nagpa-participate o sila po ay naisasantabi na lamang at nanunuod from the inside?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi naman po, tatlo—it is very clear ...

REP. ATIENZA. Sinu-sino po ba, nandito po ba iyong tatlong Commissioners?

REP. SALCEDA. Nandito po iyong Vice Chair, nandito po iyong isang Commissioner.

REP. ATIENZA. Ako po ay nagtatanong sapagkat sa aking naririnig ay parang wala ring functional relationship sa loob ng komisyon and we have a President who seemingly is not totally committed to the task at hand and we have a commission that is not performing as a commission—ay may problema tayong malaki. The Gentleman from Albay, I am sure, you will agree that our country, our islands, our archipelago is now feeling the initial impact of what we have been warned since, about a decade and a half ago, or 20 years ago.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor. We are the most significant ...

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po ba ...

REP. SALCEDA. We are the most significant country.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong typhoon Ondoy, typhoon Yolanda, ito pong mga ipo-ipo na bumibisita po at hindi lang po sa dagat. For the first time in my Manila residence, and I was born in Manila and I grew up in Manila and I led Manila for nine years, hindi po kami nabibisita ng ipo-ipo. Ito po iyong umiikot na—ano po ba ang tawag doon? Alam po ba ng ating Kagalangang ...

REP. SALCEDA. Tornado po.

REP. ATIENZA. Tornado. Hindi po ba ang tornado, bibihirang bumisita sa inland?

REP. SALCEDA. Pati ho sa Bicol, mayroon na.

REP. ATIENZA. Pero ngayon, bumibisita na.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. At para bagang may hinahanap sa loob ng mga lungsod. Siguro hinahanap po iyong mga nagpapabayang mga opisyal, dahil nagtataka kami, pumasok po sa kalagitnaan ng Sampaloc district, isang ipo-ipo, ang dami pong sinira na mga bahay, pumasok sa Second District, sa Third District rather, ganoon din po, ang daming sinirang bahay. So, therefore, climate change with its full destruction capacity is already here in our midst.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. So, therefore, there is no room for us to dilly dally. As you said India, China, and the United States have already changed their positions.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. From an earlier uninvolved, uninterested stand and refusing to sign any world accord and plan of action, now, have already signified the full intentions to be part of the solution since they are the biggest polluters of the world. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. Tayo naman po sa Pilipinas, dapat magsikap na tayo ay gumanap din ng ating tungkulin.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. Magaganap natin iyan at magagawa natin iyan kung iyong maliit na Komisyon, na maliit naman ang pondo, magkano po ba ang pondo ngayon ng Climate Change Commission, to start with?

REP. SALCEDA. P86.3 million, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. P26?

REP. SALCEDA. P86.3 million, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Million?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. P86 million?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Puwede po bang bigyan natin sila ng mas malaking pondo?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Your Honor, at the appropriate time, we will most welcome the support of the Minority in boosting the capacity of the Climate Change Commission.

REP. ATIENZA. We will support any effort to improve the financial capacity of the Commission because as we see it, wala silang masyadong magagawa kung hindi magkwentuhan na lang siguro kapag mayroon silang meeting.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi naman po.

REP. ATIENZA. Dahil wala pong programa na tatakbo sa ating bansa if you talk about reaching out to the LGUs. I heard the Gentleman say we have to reach out to the LGUs.

REP. SALCEDA. Correct.

REP. ATIENZA. I heard the Gentleman say, we have to reach out to the LGUs.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Ay papaano po sila magre-reach out kung wala silang pondo?

REP. SALCEDA. Iyon nga po. Iyon ang pinaka-number one na siguro kung tatanungin, ano ang wala dito sa budget na ito? Ang masasabi ko po, wala pong budget diyan kasi marami pong LGUs na hindi nagko-comply sa pag-prepare po ng Local Climate Change Action Plan. So, kapag ganoon po, wala tayong nasa-submit para po doon sa mga puwedeng tumulong sa Pilipinas para atin pong harapin ang epekto ng climate change at para po hindi po tayo makadagdag sa problema in terms of emission, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. May we take the opportunity to ask the Commission now on what action they have taken to address the very serious contribution no matter how small it is in the world context but it is one of the most significant contributions of the Philippines to the problem of the world in matters of climate change and that is the open garbage dumps that are all over the country now. They are still open and they are operating. They are contributing to what we call the noxious gas.

REP. SALCEDA. Methane, it is methane.

REP. ATIENZA. Methane gas which pollute the air, and the atmosphere.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Which, according to these scientists is the primary contribution of the Philippines in our worldwide problem of pollution, one of the main elements of climate change.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ba ang kanilang rekomendasyon sapagkat tuluy-tuloy po ang mga open dumps sa iba't ibang probinsiya?

REP. SALCEDA. As you know, Your Honor, they have to work with the DENR—because there is a very specific law, which is the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act or Republic Act No. 9003, Your Honor. And they are working with the Commission, which is essentially a policy making body and a resource-mobilizing body. Therefore, Your Honor, in that sense, Your Honor, they try to remind for example, the DENR with respect to their compliance with the law of Republic Act No. 9003, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Maganda po iyong sinabi ni kagalang-galang na Ginoong Sponsor sapagkat alam niya iyong dapat ginagawa. Pero, ito po ba ay naibibigay ng Komisyon, effectively, to the local government units? That they have to do something about their open dumping system which is one of the main problems of everyone? Basta't mayroon pong open dump na nag-o-operate ...

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... appektado po iyong ating buong kapuluuan. Hangga't mayroong matigas ang ulong mayor or governor ay mayroon po tayong problema. So, they have to be more active along this line.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung wala man lamang silang pondo, idemanda na lang nila iyong mga LGU na talagang matigas ang ulo, hindi gumagalaw. Eh, sapagkat kung wala pong gagalaw ay wala pong pagbabago.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. Attend tayo nang attend sa mga Climate Change Conferences at palagi namang lumalabas iyong data na iyon, eh wala naman pong

pagbabagong nagaganap. Sapagkat, umikot tayo ngayon sa Pilipinas, at puro open dump pa rin ang makikita natin.

REP. SALCEDA. Nakademanda na po, Your Honor, iyong unang batch sa Ombudsman. In fact, doon po sa aming probinsya, may mga napabilang po at ang ginagawa po natin ngayon ay tinutulungan natin na makapag-comply sila doon po sa batas. Dahil, kung minsan po kakulangan lang, dahil sa dami po ng mandato na itinatapon natin sa mga LGU kaya nahihirapan din po sila dahil Katulad po ninyo, na bilang isang alkalde, nakita ninyo naman siguro na kailangan kang mamili kung saan mo po ilalagay iyong pera. Katulad ninyo po, napaganda ninyo ang turismo ng Manila, napaganda po ninyo iyong hitsura ng buong siyudad ng Manila. Kaya po, may mga bagay po na inuuna.

Sa ngayon po, sigurado po na dahil po dito sa mga kasong na-file, na magkakaroon po ng mga pagbabago, ng prayoridad ang ating mga LGUs, na harapin ang mandato na nakasaad po sa batas.

Salamat, tinapos mo po iyong aking interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Pasensya na po kayo at may dumaan pong magandang ginang dito sa likod ko eh nagambala po ang aking concentration.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po.

REP. ATIENZA. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the Gentleman from Albay is very knowledgeable on the issue of climate change. I mentioned about the non-involvement of LGUs on the solution and, meanwhile, the country now is being visited by weather phenomena and climate change's disastrous effects, so we need to move faster.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, therefore, the Commission, although limited in their financial capacity, must get together and confront the issue with the President. Sana huwag na tayong makarinig ng mga salitang, "Hindi ako kasali diyan. Hindi ko alam iyan eh," dahil siya ang Pangulo ng bansa at tayo naman ay bahagi ng United Nations' efforts on this matter. So, it is most disheartening when one hears a statement coming from the President, no less, that the climate change conference or a treaty, or agreement does not hold as far as the he is concerned.

REP. SALCEDA. Ibinulong po sa amin ng Climate Change, ng atin pong mga Commissioners, na gagawin nila ang lahat na makapagrekomenda sa ating Pangulo na i-ratify na po ang treaty na may caveat po na para

po naman iyong national interest po ay atin pong madepensahan.

REP. ATIENZA. Kagaya po ng aking naipaalala, iyong matitigas ang ulong LGU ay sampulan na ninyo. Kapag mayroon pong nasuspindeng gobernador o mayor, at nakasuhan nang matindi, eh palagay ko ay lahat susunod na. Dahil kung hindi gagawin iyan ng Komisyon, eh sino po ang gagawa niyan? Wala pong nagbibigay paraan sa loob ng ating batas kung hindi ang Commission on Climate Change.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo. Salamat po.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong binanggit ninyong batas na Republic Act 9003 ay ipinasa noong pagkatapos lamang ng initial agreements signed by the Philippines in the United Nations Climate Change Committee. Pero hindi po ito ipinatutupad at hindi po natutupad kaya tuluy-tuloy po naman ang pollution sa ating bansa. We hope the materials that we read in the newspapers, and I was reading the newspaper the other day, some time, only a few days ago, na mayroong naghahari-harian sa loob ng Komisyon, na binanggit na ni Congressman Bravo, our colleague, and this is disrupting the concentration of the nation and probably discouraging the President if he hears about it, that, ang liit-liit ng opisina, at ang liit-liit ng pondo ay mayroon pang naghahari-harian. Totoo po ba ang nabasa ko kay Mon Tulfo ...

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po.

REP. ATIENZA. ... na mayroong hari na may 14 na security guard employed by the Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po. May leader lang.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po totoo iyon?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po. May leader lang, pero walang hari.

REP. ATIENZA. Puwede po ba nating ma-check ang records ng Commission kung ...

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... ang 14 na security ay may suweldo sa Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo. Actually, ipinangako ko na kay Congressman Bravo.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi na po ako tatawag ng

congressional inquiry diyan. Palagay ko po ay kakausapin ko na lang isa-isa ang mga Commissioner, malalaman ko na ang katotohanan.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. But the Sponsor will agree, Mr. Speaker, that there is no place for this kind of attitude from any public office.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, we will not allow anyone to disrupt the main function of his office. Kung tayo ay nagtatrabaho sa gobyerno, kayo man ay Congressman, mayor, governor, kailangang sineseryoso natin ang pagtulong sa solusyon sa problema at hindi iyong nagpapalala pa tayo ng problema sa loob ng ating tanggapan.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Since this matter has been brought to us by media, we will continue to monitor ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. ... the doings inside the Commission as we are concerned with the functions that they are performing.

REP. SALCEDA. We will comply.

REP. ATIENZA. Sang-ayon po ba kayo roon, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, we will comply with all the commitments made, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Pagtulong-tulungan po nating dagdagan ang pondo ng Climate Change Commission ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. ... para naman maging epektibo ito. Kung hindi, baka nga ganoon na lang ang mangyari diyan.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Magtinginan sila sa isa't isa sapagkat walang capacity building na sinasabi ninyo, wala tayong maifa-file na kaso, at wala po tayong aksyon na magagawa kung hindi ito bibigyan ng pondo na gagamitin ng komisyon sa kanilang trabaho.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. Again, this is one office, Mr. Speaker, where Congress should play a role in doing something positive. Tingnan natin ano ang nangyayari diyan at tingnan natin kung papaano tayo makakatulong.

Mr. Speaker, I join the Gentleman from Albay in his concerns for the nation. I worry about the Philippines, and I worry about everything that has been projected by the United Nations, no less, by the scientists of the world who have already warned the world and the nation that we are in the direct path of the destruction of portions, a major portion of the planet Earth. Kawawa po naman tayo; hindi pa nga nakakatikim ng masaya at masaganang buhay ang bawat Pilipino, dudurugin pa tayo ng mga dumarating na bagyo, ipo-ipo at mga taong hindi gumaganap ng tungkulin nila sa tamang paraan. Kailangan nating pag-ingatan ito sapagkat diyan nakasalalay ang tagumpay ng ating mga pangarap—maunlad, masaya at masaganang buhay para sa Pilipinas.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po nang marami, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Gentleman for his patience in answering our queries. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Lagman is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will our distinguished colleague from Albay, Mr. Climate Change, Adaptation and Mitigation himself, yield to a series of questions?

REP. SALCEDA. To three questions, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. LAGMAN. A series of questions.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Aside from the appropriations we provide for

the Climate Change Commission in the General Appropriations Act, are there foreign donations, grants and/or loans accessed by the government or by the Commission in US dollars since its organization in 2010?

REP. SALCEDA. Actually nakatulong po sila pero hindi naman kalakihan. Galing sa ADB, GCF, sa Germany at World Bank.

In other words, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, sila ang nagpa-package pero ang nag-i-implement ay ang national government agencies o direkta na ibinibigay sa local government units, lalung-lalo na po kung grants, dinederetso sa local government units.

REP. LAGMAN. My question really is not the sources, but the magnitude of these dollar inflows for climate change, which has been accessed or received by the national government or the Commission itself.

REP. SALCEDA. Actually, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, ang dumaaan po sa Climate Change Commission ay \$11.37 million, mostly from the UNDP, accounting for \$9.3 million.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, the distinguished Sponsor mentioned one source like the ADB. How much has been accessed or received from the ADB?

REP. SALCEDA. I am sorry, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, is the Gentleman asking what was given directly to the Climate Change Commission?

REP. LAGMAN. No, both to the national government or to the Commission, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. I would beg for some time, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, to total all of it because the role of the Climate Change Commission is essentially an enabler or packager; therefore, we need to account every size of the package.

REP. LAGMAN. I would assume that the Commission came here prepared for those data because, to disabuse the minds of the Members of this august Chamber, that the Commission is relying solely on appropriations made by Congress considering there are other funding sources for the activities of the Commission with respect to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

REP. SALCEDA. That would be a correct rendition, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, what is the magnitude altogether, since 2010, in dollar terms which were accessed as grants, donations or loans?

REP. SALCEDA. We will submit, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, a more comprehensive list with the appropriate amounts. But now, the records are not here because the new Commissioner has just assumed office.

REP. LAGMAN. With more reason because they are new, they should brush up on what has happened before their incumbency.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. We will expeditiously comply.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we have it tomorrow even if it is a Saturday, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, according to the Commissioner.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. I will be in my office tomorrow, a Saturday. What time will this report be submitted, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. After the session, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So the Gentleman may go to Albay tomorrow.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you so much for that expeditious submission, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, did I hear the distinguished Sponsor right that these foreign donations and grants or loans are utilized by the national government through the Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. As I have said, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the \$11.3 million are essentially grants given directly to the Commission. These grants were approved by the National Economic and Development Authority as its principal.

REP. LAGMAN. These grants are given directly to the Commission, and Congress does not have any participation in the appropriation of these grants, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, to be more exact, the money given to the Commission are managed or spent by the development partners themselves.

REP. LAGMAN. By the whom, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Mostly by the development partners, like the UNDP, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mostly, but partly by whom, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. I would say, Your Honor, Mr.

Speaker, significantly in the list I have here are the USAID and the UNDP. Sila mismo ang nagpapatupad, pero ang nagtuturo po kung kanino ibibigay ay ang Commission, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Ito pala parang the infamous PDAF. Itinuturo lang ng Congressman kung ano ang projects, pero hindi naman niya ini-implement. Ang nag-i-implement ang implementing agency. Ganoon po ba, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po, pero hindi naman PDAF.

REP. LAGMAN. No. It is just a comparison that it is being implemented by another agency.

REP. SALCEDA. In short, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, they are the packager, enabler and catalyzer, and these funds are essentially given to our development partners as priorities.

REP. LAGMAN. Are we supposed to consider that the grants from the ADB, from Germany, and from the World Bank are being implemented by the donors or grantors themselves?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala pong dumadaan sa accounting system nila, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Ano po iyon?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala pa pong dumaan sa accounting system nila, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. In other words, hindi dumaan sa bangko ng CCC.

REP. LAGMAN. So not a single centavo of these dollar donations or grants has passed through the Commission.

REP. SALCEDA. The Commission is not an implementing agency. It is essentially a policy making agency, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Are these grants and donations covered by specific agreements? I suppose they are, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. They are, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Bilaterally, there will be the exchange of notes.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. May we have copies of the bilateral agreements concerning these dollar donations and grants, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. What we can provide, Your

Honor, Mr. Speaker, is the COA report because even if these funds do not pass through our Climate Change Commission, those are COA-audited.

REP. LAGMAN. I am not, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, asking for a COA report.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, we will provide.

REP. LAGMAN. I am asking for the pertinent loan or grant agreements.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the grant agreements.

REP. LAGMAN. May these be submitted tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Do local government units have direct access on their own action plan on climate change adaptation and mitigation, to secure grants or loans from foreign sources, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. More or less, how many local government units have been able to access such dollar donations or grants?

REP. SALCEDA. Mga 100 po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. That is 100.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. LAGMAN. I suppose the Commission would monitor the utilization by these local government units of the grants, loans or donations accessed from foreign sources.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. May we have also, as part of the submission, the monitoring reports of the Commission with respect to the utilization by local government units of the dollar donations and grants they have accessed or received from foreign sources.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we will submit.

REP. LAGMAN. Can that be part of the submission tomorrow, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. May we also have a listing of these around 100 local government units that were able to access some funds, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. What is the latest on the President's take or action on the Paris Agreement?

REP. SALCEDA. The presidential pronouncement, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is that he is averse to ratifying it. But the position of the Commission is, just like the other countries like India and China, which the President cited as his own basis for his aversion, it is already ratified but with a caveat, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, with respect to protecting the share or the national interest in terms of our ability to fuel our national development, our growth targets.

REP. LAGMAN. Has the Commission, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, recommended to the President that it is for our national interest to have the Paris Agreement ratified soonest?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the DFA has already rounded all the pertinent agencies. Once it is summed up, that summation will be submitted by the DFA to the Climate Change Commission for endorsement to the President.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Commission has not rendered any separate recommendation to the President at the moment.

REP. SALCEDA. Officially, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, yes, there is no official recommendation. Although there are pronouncements because we were party to the Paris Agreement when it was agreed upon. What is necessary right now is the ratification, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. I seem to recall, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that the President has backtracked from his previous adverse reaction, and is willing to consider the ratification of the Paris Agreement. Is that a correct recollection, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is a correct interpretation.

REP. LAGMAN. To what extent has the Commission influenced the President to change his mind?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor,

the Commission is the principal negotiator of the Philippines in the conference of parties of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. But it is the DFA that works on its ratification, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, therefore it is the DFA that essentially gets all the inputs from the other agencies. However, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, as the principal policy-making body on climate change of the Philippines, as designed by Congress, of course, we understand and we will expect that the President will ask the Commission with respect to its position, or the DFA will consider the position of the Commission on the eventual position of the administration to that Paris Agreement.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, has the Commission made any statement, public statement urging the President to have the Paris Agreement ratified for the national interest?

REP. SALCEDA. We in the Commission has sent the President briefers ...

REP. LAGMAN. Briefers?

REP. SALCEDA. Briefing or aide-memoire. I would still say it is a briefer because there is no recommendation, I suppose, because we do not, considering the initial pronouncements of the President with respect to the issue, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. So, I would say, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that the Commission is also sponsoring that Climate Change Summit. In fact, it is the Office of the President that is initiating the Climate Change Summit next week in Cebu that will essentially mobilize or harness the national consensus with respect to our position towards the Paris Agreement.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, were these briefers conveyed to the President verbally or they were in writing?

REP. SALCEDA. They were official documents, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. May we have copies of the official documents covering these briefers as part of the submission tomorrow.

REP. SALCEDA. These are memos for the President, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, and therefore we might have to ask permission or clearance from the Office of the Executive Secretary. But once we secure that clearance, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we will provide Congress a copy.

REP. LAGMAN. Why? These are briefers coming

from the Commission itself. Then why should it be impounded with respect to disclosure by the Executive Secretary or the Office of the President?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the position of the Commission as given to me was only as a matter of courtesy.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. SALCEDA. But I guess, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there is nothing to prevent them from providing it to you...

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. ...because it is under the FOI and EO No. 2 of the President.

REP. LAGMAN. That is correct.

REP. SALCEDA. I guess we have access to these documents.

REP. LAGMAN. I will not have to go to that, distinguished Sponsor. Now, how does the Philippines rank in the list of disaster-prone countries per global ratings?

REP. SALCEDA. To summarize, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we are always in the top five.

REP. LAGMAN. Top five.

REP. SALCEDA. But if you take away this Tuvalu, then I guess, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we are virtually always number one.

REP. LAGMAN. What are the peculiar risk factors which would make the Philippines within the top five or number one in the list of disaster-prone countries?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, its location. We are right there as the doormat to where the typhoons eventually evolve—where they are born in Pacific Ocean; they migrate and then suddenly they become full-blown typhoons once they are with us.

That is why, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there is such a thing as the “Pacific jinx.” All the regions facing the Pacific Ocean are 42-percent lower in terms of per capita income than regions facing the South China Sea, simply because, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, of climate change risk. The second risk factor, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is the fact that while we are already in the typhoon belt, we are also in the seismic

belt; we are also in the earthquake belt and the volcanic, or the Pacific Ring of Fire. Therefore, the complex interaction of these other risk factors build into a very high vulnerability, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I would then understand that all of these risk factors would underscore the important role of the Commission. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. That is why Congress saw it fit to enact this law and create its own committee, especially the Committee on Climate Change, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Would the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, tell us what is the effect of the calamities occasioned by a climate change to the marginalized and disadvantaged?

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, can I submit that, but definitely, it creates more poor people. It makes poor people poorer, and on the aggregate, it reduces our growth potential by 0.51 percent, Your Honor. So, in simple language, Your Honor, both in terms of the inequality and both in terms of growth, it adversely affects the Philippines, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Again, that would underscore the very important role of the Commission.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. At the proper time, I would join the Members of the House to possibly augment the appropriations for the Commission. Well, I suppose before we do that, the Commission should submit the request for augmentation to the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations so that we could act accordingly.

REP. SALCEDA. That should be a very good motivation, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. But after augmenting the appropriations for the Climate Change Commission, the House of Representatives must exercise its oversight function to see to it that these funds are utilized effectively and properly.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, to my last point, to disabuse the minds of the Members of the House, the Climate Change Commission is not involved in the costly relief operations due to calamities. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, but it does broadcast—in short, that essentially, we are making the link that these things are a result of our high vulnerability to climate change, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Its role is really before the calamity comes ...

REP. SALCEDA. Before, mostly before.

REP. LAGMAN. ... and after the calamity is over.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Thank you so much, distinguished Sponsor, my good colleague from Albay, for answering my questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you for the 12 questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Representative from the Third District of Quezon, Rep. Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Minority Leader, the Honorable Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. I just want to have very few questions. We have a saying, so much to do, yet so little time. Dito ho naman, so much to do with so little money. Kaya nagulat ho ako noong makita ko iyong appropriation na hinihingi, considering the gargantuan task that they will have to do, napakaliit ho. So, bagama't ang nag-prepare po ng budget na ito was the previous administration, maybe Cong. Karlo Nograles is present. Maybe, this will be the best time to address that. Baka naman sa isang taon, madagdagan ang pondo ng napaka-sensitive na office na ito.

My first question is, I would imagine that your principal, distinguished Sponsor, worked closely with the other agencies in the world that has some connection with climate issue. Is that correct? So, iyong sinasabi ho nating reported warming ng ating daigdig, is that a fact? Is that proven or just a mere theory?

REP. SALCEDA. I think the word of the IPCC which is really a pool of, I think, more than a thousand scientists, Your Honor, says that climate change is unequivocal and here in this latest AR4, Your Honor, which is the latest analysis of the climate ...

REP. SUAREZ. Medyo nakakatakot po iyan na sinasabi nating yearly, painit din po nang painit, at tumataas ang temperature. So, mayroon ba namang panahon o taon na bumaba ang ...

REP. SALCEDA. Mayroon po.

REP. SUAREZ. Mayroon ho naman na bumaba ang temperature on an average?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po. Ang analytics po ay, kapag titingnan po iyong trend line, it is like a tunnel that is going up, Mr. Speaker, so bumababa po siya doon sa lower end of the tunnel, but it goes right up to the peak of the tunnel, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Considering that there are several effects outside of food security where climate plays a major role, kagaya ho, tinanong ko earlier before my turn, I asked, "Do they have a satellite office?" They said that they have an office in the DENR. I asked them whether they do have an office in the Department of Science and Technology, and they said they do not have. May I suggest that bagaman at napakaliit pa ho ng budget nila, that on the proposed budget for 2018, they must have close coordination with the DOST. Because if I ask them, "Can you give support to the farmers on rain precipitation?" ay sasabihin po nila, "Wala ho kaming idea, but the DOST has those information."

REP. SALCEDA. Nasa PAGASA po.

REP. SUAREZ. So, along that line, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this is more of, what we call the learning curve in terms of deliberations on budgets like this, and this is a classic example on a very important office that must be given support.

With that, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the Minority has no more questions to raise on the proposed budget of the Climate Change Commission. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, distinguished Sponsor.

I move to terminate, on the part of the Minority, the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Climate Change Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROA-PUNO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of

interpellation and debate on the budget of the Climate Change Commission. I so move, Mr. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 3408.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ELECTION OF REP. ZARATE TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we elect as Vice Chairperson of the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is as approved.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I move to resume the consideration of House Bill No. 3408, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

AURORA PACIFIC ECONOMIC ZONE
AND FREEPORT AUTHORITY

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we, once again, recognize the Gentleman from Albay, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Salceda is recognized for the sponsorship.

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Before we go on, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of Atty. Israel F. Maducdoc, the President and CEO of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority or APECO.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The presence of the said guest is acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Representative from the Third District of Quezon, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, the Minority Leader, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The honorable Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo Suarez, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Is the distinguished Sponsor willing to yield to some questions on the proposed budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, this Aurora, for your information,

distinguished Sponsor, is normally named after Aurora Quezon who is the wife of our great leader, President Manuel Quezon, and once a part of Quezon province.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right. Thank you for the information, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. And because of that, the Minority imposes no question on the proposed budget ...

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much.

REP. SUAREZ. ... of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

On behalf of the Minority, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROA-PUNO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan. I so move, Your Honor.

Your Honor, correction please, this is for the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion coming from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

AUTHORITY OF THE FREEPORT AREA
OF BATAAN

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. ROA-PUNO. We would like to acknowledge the presence of Atty. Patrick Lester N. Ty, the acting Chairman and Administrator of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Please rise, the named guest. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Representative from Party-List AANGAT TAYO, Rep. Harlin Neil J. Abayon III, for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ABAYON. Mr. Speaker, there being no member of the Minority who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor of the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ROA-PUNO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion by the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the Sr. Dep. Administrator for Support Services of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Atty. Ramon O. Agregado.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The named guest will please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 2:40 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to withdraw the motion to consider the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the same is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to begin the consideration of the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority or the BCDA.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the same is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, we move for a suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 2:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:42 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my motion for the consideration of the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA).

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY OF THE PHILIPPINES

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Development Academy of the Philippines.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there

any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Albay, Rep. Joey Salceda to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Development Academy of the Philippines.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Kalaw, is here.

REP. DE VENECIA. Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. DE VENECIA. Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Salceda is recognized.

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DE VENECIA. But before that, Mr. Speaker, we would just like to acknowledge the presence of President Antonio C. Kalaw Jr., Senior Vice President Magdalena L. Mendoza, Senior Vice President Bernardo A. Dizon, Vice President Arnel D. Abanto, Director Nanette C. Caparros, Vice President Monina A.B. De Armas, Atty. Gideon D.V. Mortel, Vice President Carlos A. Sayco Jr., Anatalia Baraudan, Krichelle L. Ching, and Emerson Labang.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). President Antonio Kalaw and the DAP family, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 2:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:45 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Minority Leader, Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The honorable Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo Suarez is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

I just have a minor clarificatory question for this very important Academy. Distinguished Sponsor, where is this? I understand it is located in Tagaytay. Am I correct there?

REP. SALCEDA. They have a facility in Tagaytay for training but their main institute, so to speak, is actually in San Miguel Avenue, Mr. Speaker, in—I do not know—I think it is in Ortigas? Mandaluyong ba iyon?

REP. SUAREZ. And can we just be given some learning curve on this because we are allocating P0.5 billion, and I would just like to find out the basic function of their existence.

Ano po ang primary purpose nitong DAP, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SALCEDA. Parang siya po iyong Asian Institute na in-house ng gobyerno, Mr. Speaker, na kung saan tine-train po—in short, Mr. Speaker, it is a government entity that essentially provides training to all government officials, including Congress, especially to the neophytes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Including us?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. It provides training, Mr. Speaker, if you so desire.

REP. SUAREZ. Can the Gentleman ask the principal what training they have rendered on behalf of our ...

REP. SALCEDA. When I was still—they got me before to train Pacquiao, Mr. Speaker. I also trained Leni Robredo, Mr. Speaker, under the DAP auspices, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Do they give training to first-term Members of this august Body?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. They have leadership seminars, essentially, Mr. Speaker, on the legislative functions as well as of course, the domain of public policies, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Do they collect fees, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. I think so, Mr. Speaker. The DAP collects fees because it is considered as a GOCC, and

in fact, it is under the GCG. So, it is mandated by the government to earn money.

REP. SUAREZ. What other government agency, Mr. Speaker, does the Gentleman see as a duplication of what they are doing?

REP. SALCEDA. The closest, Mr. Speaker, is the PIDS, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, but, Mr. Speaker, their output is research, the DAP's output is training. So, in that sense, Mr. Speaker, it is a little different. Both of them use empirical evidence, except that iyong PIDS uses it essentially for publication. There are more PIDS publications than DAP publication, and there is hardly any training in the PIDS except for the internship, while the DAP trains a lot of our government officials, especially the senior government officials, Mr. Speaker, those who want CESO. In short, Mr. Speaker, they provide training.

REP. SUAREZ. So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, those revenues that they generate as fees for training, will they be part and parcel of their budget or are they earnings that they can spend as well in terms of their MOOE?

REP. SALCEDA. They have use of income, Mr. Speaker. For example, last year, Mr. Speaker, they were supposed to earn P498 million, and last year, we only gave them P268 million. So they used it essentially for public sector human resource management development, support for the programs and projects of the Productivity and Development Center, modernizing government regulation for national competitiveness, center for excellence on public sector productivity, harmonization of the national government—and in short, Mr. Speaker, parang AIM nga po.

REP. SUAREZ. Considering the much-experienced Sponsor's vast knowledge of this field, how would he compare DAP with AIM?

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong AIM po, corporate po ang tini-train. Sila po, ang tini-train po, tayo, gobyerno.

REP. SUAREZ. Kung minsan po ay nag-a-avail ang mga government offices sa AIM, hindi po ba?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, they have to compete with AIM, Mr. Speaker, para po dito sa mga training. Siguro, may isa pa pong puwede ma-compare sa kanila, NCPAG. So, iyon po ang closest, I would say. I am sorry, let me revise it. Hindi po PIDS, kung hindi NCPAG ang pinakahalintulad po nila.

REP. SUAREZ. Pinakamalapit?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo. So, nagte-train din po sila ng all types and levels of government, but DAP generally focuses on top management or senior middle management, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I do not mean to be rude, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to imagine that—has the Gentleman been to the DAP, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong sa Tagaytay o iyong dito po? Opo, nakaakyat na po ako ilang beses.

REP. SUAREZ. So, bago mo dinipensa itong budget ng DAP, I suppose the Gentleman did some brainstorming with them about their existence?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo. Iyong katulad iyong sa Tagaytay...

REP. SUAREZ. So what will be their wish list for 2018?

REP. SALCEDA. Nakakasayang po iyong kanilang property doon po sa Tagaytay kung saan po maraming trainings at seminars na ginaganap dahil napakaluma at napakapangit na po nito.

REP. SUAREZ. Kamusta po ang absorptive capacity nila? Nauubos ba naman nila iyong budget nila? Walang natitira? Walang savings?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, iyon ang hirap po kasi, parang may profit schedule sila. So, katulad niyan, iyong total income nila, 559, binigyan natin ng 67, so kumita po sila ng P5 million, Mr. Speaker. So, iba po iyong level po, hindi absorptive capacity, kung hindi the ability to earn as well as, of course, provide training. So, may output: ilan po ang na-train nila, at pangalawa, kung kumita po sila.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong charter nila, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, sa charter nila, iyon pong earnings nila do not have to be reverted to the National Treasury, puwede ho nilang ma-retain at magamit. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. GOCC po sila, so 50 percent dividend din po sila, para pong PAGCOR.

REP. SUAREZ. Maybe, what we can do, distinguished Sponsor, considering the Gentleman is sponsoring, for me, a vital institution like this, is find out how we can harness their potential even more...

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. . . . in the coming six years kasi ito ho ay isa sa mahahalagang opisina na dapat nating bigyan ng pansin, katulad noong Climate Change Commission.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, we have no more questions to raise on the proposed budget for the Development Academy of the Philippines.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation on the budget of the Development Academy of the Philippines.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of sponsorship and interpellations on the budget of the Development Academy of the Philippines.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the same is approved. (*Applause*)

CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of Dr. Raul M. Sunico, President of the CCP.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The named guest, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Albay, Rep. Joey Salceda, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Salceda is recognized.

REP. SALCEDA. This Representation is ready to answer questions, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Lady from the Sixth District of Manila, Hon. Rosenda Ann Ocampo, for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Ocampo is recognized.

REP. OCAMPO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor respond to my question regarding the Capital Outlay in the budget of the CCP?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, willingly to a classmate and a friend,.

REP. OCAMPO. Thank you.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have been to the CCP a few times, and I found the condition of the Center—I think that there is a need for us to spend a lot of money to restore and improve the facilities so that it can stand the test of time.

REP. SALCEDA. I think I will definitely agree with the observation of the Lady.

REP. OCAMPO. Are there enough funds to complete in 2017 the initiative that was undertaken starting last year, funded out of the 2016 Budget?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Mr. Speaker, there is a rolling commitment of the DBM, essentially. The total Capital Outlay is P604.559 million for 2017, and essentially, for the new Performing Arts Theater and the Artists' Center, and P10 million for furniture and fixtures, I guess for the CCP main complex.

REP. OCAMPO. Mr. Speaker, the main complex really needs refurbishing and since this is the Cultural Center of the Philippines, we would like to know that there are enough funds for 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the other day, we discussed the budget for the NCCA and it was quite deplorable that the budget proposed was slashed drastically from P189 to P29 million. I would not like to see the same thing happening to the Cultural Center of the Philippines project.

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the CCP has actually seen an increase, from P767 million to P1.1 billion. So, . . .

REP. OCAMPO. No, my question is, is it sufficient? This is for the main building and the two new buildings, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Iyong new building are fully funded, Mr. Speaker.

REP. OCAMPO. And the original building?

REP. SALCEDA. May P303 million po siya this year pero hindi pa po nai-implement; it is in the process of procurement.

REP. OCAMPO. And the budget for 2017 will be a continuing budget for 2016?

REP. SALCEDA. Iba na po. Iyong tatlo po, Black Box Theater, Performing Arts Theater and the Artists' Center, Mr. Speaker. So, para mas specific: Black Box Theater, P150 million; Performing Arts Theater, P262 million; the Artist Center, P182 million; and Furniture and Fixture, P11 million, for a total of P604 million. This is different from the P303 million this year, Mr. Speaker, for the main building.

REP. OCAMPO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. I am fully satisfied.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Luis Jose Angel N. Campos, Jr. from the Second District of Makati for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Campos is recognized.

REP. CAMPOS. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, there being no other Member who wishes to ask any question, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the CCP.

I so move, Your Honor.

REP. DE VENECIA. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Majority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion by the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we

begin the consideration of the budget of the Philippine Center for Economic Development.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the Executive Director of the PCED, Orville Jose C. Solon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The named guest will please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Albay, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Philippine Center for Economic Development.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Honorable Salceda is recognized for his sponsorship speech.

REP. SALCEDA. This Representation is ready to answer questions, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Luis Jose Angel N. Campos Jr. from the Second District of Makati City for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Luis Jose Angel N. Campos Jr. is recognized.

REP. CAMPOS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, there being no other Member who wishes to ask any questions, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Center for Economic Development.

I so move, Your Honor.

REP. DE VENECIA. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Center for Economic Development.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Center for Economic Development.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the same is approved. *(Applause)*

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 3:02 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is resumed.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Tarlac, Rep. Carlos "Charlie" O. Cojuangco, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Carlos "Charlie" O. Cojuangco is recognized for his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. COJUANGCO

REP. COJUANGCO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. In our world of rapid change, the Filipino nation finds itself amidst complex challenges as well as strategic opportunities for collaboration. From building bridges of friendship with other nations and opening doors for Philippine businesses to containing pandemics, and addressing violent extremism, climate change, migration issues, and human and drug trafficking, the Philippine government works for the best interest of its people, both here and abroad. On the world stage, diplomacy is our first line of defense.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues in this august Body, it is in this context that the Department of Foreign Affairs continues to fulfill its mission of promoting and protecting Philippine interests in the global community.

With its vision of a resilient foreign service for a strong Philippines, it has proven to be a solid institution capable of quickly, efficiently and effectively adopting and responding to the demands of our evolving geopolitical and economic landscape.

Mandated to preserve and enhance national security, promote economic diplomacy, protect the rights and promote the welfare of Filipino overseas, and engage in cultural promotion and image-building, the Department of Foreign Affairs is expected to perform its gargantuan task of implementing a Philippine foreign policy anchored on the needs of our country and people.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, our key representative agency in the world community, is respectfully requesting a budget of P16.63 billion. The budgets for the Department's three attached agencies are likewise hereby submitted for consideration: P60.14 million for Foreign Service Institute; P4.48 million for the Technical Cooperation Council of the Philippines; and lastly, P21.09 million for the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines. The total budget of the Department and its attached agencies is P16.71 billion.

The DFA budget stands at only 0.50 percent of the P3.35 trillion national budget, down from 0.70 percent for the current year. Nevertheless, this budget is an investment in our nation's sustained growth, development and security, and the safety of our nationals overseas. Despite meager resources, the men and women of the Department of Foreign Affairs remain resolute in their commitment and service.

Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, I respectfully endorse to the plenary the 2017 budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and its attached agencies in the amount of P16.71 billion and humbly solicit your kind support for its favorable consideration and approval.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed with the interpellation, may we just acknowledge the presence of our distinguished guests from the Department of Foreign Affairs: of course, Secretary Perfecto R. Yasay Jr. (*Applause*); Usec. for Admin, Linglingay F. Lacanlale; (*Applause*) Usec. for International Economic Relations, Manuel A.J. Teehankee; (*Applause*) Usec. for Migrant Workers Affairs, Jesus I. Yabes; (*Applause*) Usec. for Policy, Enrique Manalo; and all assistant secretaries and heads of agencies under the DFA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Emmi A. De Jesus of GABRIELA for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Emmi A. De Jesus is recognized.

REP. DE JESUS. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa ating Sponsor. Magandang hapon din po sa pamilya ng Department of Foreign Affairs, especially po sa bagong luklok, kay Secretary Yasay.

Ang focus po ng katanungan ko ay itong very current na pronouncement ng ating Pangulong Duterte kaugnay po noong kanyang sinabi na sa taong ito, huling-huli na raw ang magaganap na pagbisita rito ng mga sundalong Amerikano, at asahan na sa darating na taon ay tapos na—ibig sabihin, kayo po ba, ano po ba ang tindig dito ng kasalukuyang ahensiya dito sa pronouncement na ito—which we welcome very much—ng ating Pangulo?

REP. COJUANGCO. To the Honorable De Jesus, EDCA being a treaty, a foreign treaty, both parties must be in agreement in the implementation of said treaty. So, if we, as host, would like to defer or postpone next year's training exercise, I think that is built into the treaty.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, salamat po sa panimula pero ang gusto ko pong linawin, dalawa po kasi ang kasunduan na nagpapapayag sa pagpasok ng US military exercises—iyon pong Visiting Forces Agreement at iyong EDCA.

So, ang sinasabi po, Mr. Speaker, ng ating G. I sponsor, the moment, unilaterally, we say that we will be stopping their “visit” within our territories, so be it. Iyon po ba ang ibig sabihin nito? Uulitin ko po. So, as I heard it a while ago, my understanding was that should we decide as a host country, on the Agreement for the US Visiting Forces to come in, should we say that ayaw na natin, so be it. Tama po ba, Mr. Speaker, G. I sponsor?

REP. COJUANGCO. The policy of the government is to continue and to respect the treaties and commitments that we have with our foreign allies. However, with regard to the joint exercises, there is a board that meets and reviews whether both sides are willing to implement the exercise. So, basically, it is an Executive decision.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, so, do we have to go through the meeting of both parties? Or when you say it is an Executive decision, when the President mentioned that this is the last time that we will be hosting military exercises through the two Agreements, the Executive can say, upon the earlier pronouncement of our President

and upon his command to the Executive? I just want to clarify or concretize the next steps.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your Honor. Until such time that the direction of the President would change, then that would also change; but based on the pronouncement, then, the DFA should be working in that direction.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, parang nakakakaba naman iyon, baka mag-iba na naman ng direksiyon ano. Anyway, at this point in time, what we appreciate is that should the President command the Executive to implement his position with regard to ending the visit of the US military forces, and this is tantamount to saying na parang pinapawalang bisa na rin natin iyong mga nakasaad na sila ay puwedeng gumawa rito ng military exercises, can we have the assurance that should this happen, iyon po bang budget, magkano po ba ang budget na nakalaan sa Visiting Forces Agreement pagka mayroon pong military exercises sa ating bayan?

REP. COJUANGCO. With regard to the budget of the military exercises and activities, those expenditures are under the purview of the AFP.

REP. DE JESUS. Ang tanong ko po: Do you agree, does the agency agree that should there be an end to the Visiting Forces Agreement and the EDCA provisions, that we will be stopping our hosting of the military exercises, do you agree that the budget for those exercises should be allotted to items that will be of more use to the people, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. COJUANGCO. It is not the responsibility or purview of the DFA to decide whether the exercises will continue or not, and the DFA does not spend any funds to hold these exercises.

REP. DE JESUS. I understand, Mr. Speaker, but I think I just would like to hear your appreciation because when you say independent foreign policy, I think that any agreement like the VFA and the EDCA are also within your purview. With regard to the budget, what I just want to appreciate is, would you support that should there be an end, then, therefore, the budget should be allotted to the more important needs of our people?

REP. COJUANGCO. Of course, we should always support and study what is in our nation's interest, notwithstanding that we always have more problems to fix and always less resources to fix them with. National defense is certainly one of them. Even our foreign relations resources are also wanting. So, we have to make do with what we have. We have to be more efficient with it and I think, if we are going to target

efficiencies, that we should not just concentrate on the defense or foreign relations arena, but we should also check the other areas as well.

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your answer, Mr. Sponsor.

Why are we always on our toes whenever there is a news update with regard to EDCA and VFA? This Representation is really always on guard. Alam po ninyo, iyong paninindigan ng GABRIELA at ng mga kababaihang affected economically, and of course, at mas importante, culturally, dito po sa presensya ng mga sundalong military, at marami na tayong karanasan dito, talagang babantayan po namin ito dahil ang paninindigan po namin ay dapat talagangwakasan na ang mga agreements na ang tingin namin ay nadedehado tayo, at kung may pondong nakalaan para sa programang iyan, ilaan na natin sa iba.

Sa iba pong punto, Mr. Speaker, natutuwa rin po kami na ang paglabas ngayon ng ating Pangulo ay may prayoridad siya doon sa ating mga kalapit na bayan, ano. In fact, kanina po, kausap ko si Secretary, mukhang kadarating lang galing sa biyahe, at gusto lang malaman po ng Representasyong ito, ano po ba ang mga trade and foreign agreements which he can possibly share with us and that we can look forward to. Ang isang iniingatan talaga po natin kapagka mga trade agreements, ito po sanang iyong hindi tayo madedehado, iyong mga agreements na may pakinabangan ang ating mga mamamayan, na sana ay makatulong din sa pagbuhay ng ating mga industriya.

Mr. Speaker, can the Sponsor give us even an initial enlightenment, an update on what we have possibly gained dito mula po sa mga current trips ng ating Pangulo.

REP. COJUANGCO. Well, prior to the Vietnam trip, the President attended the ASEAN Summit, with us being the host for next year's conference which would be held here in Manila. It gave the President, as the host Executive, a chance to preview the agenda for next year's conference. I am hopeful that our interest in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea will be more diplomatically presented to our ASEAN counterparts and hopefully, the Association may come up with a stronger joint statement in support of the Philippine interest.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, maraming salamat po sa sagot.

At, I think I would just be asking further, at hindi ko na po ibi-belabor iyong mga datos dahil may mga specific questions din po ako na may kaugnayan naman doon sa effort, the updated effort, with regard to staying off the death penalty to our kababayan, kay Mary Jane, po. Does the agency already have any update on the case of Mary Jane Veloso, on staying off the implementation of the death penalty?

REP. COJUANGCO. There is an update that we have been able to secure, an indefinite staying off her execution and so, although she is still incarcerated, it is indefinite.

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. So, iyong lang po ang categorical.

REP. COJUANGCO. As a follow-up to that question regarding Mary Jane F. Veloso, the country is making representation with the Indonesian government to be able to try to continue the legal proceedings here in the Philippines so that we can further investigate whether Mary Jane is in fact just a victim of a broader syndicate and possibly prove who really is the guilty party here.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, salamat po sa kasagutan, Mr. Sponsor. Categorically, it is still, parang delaying muna, holding off the execution which, to us siguro, we are really looking forward to getting her out and letting her come back dito sa ating bayan dahil nakakausap din namin po ang kanyang pamilya.

Anyway, to end this, I would like to manifest, firstly, ang amin pong sektor and on behalf of our Makabayan bloc here in the Seventeenth Congress, we are very much pushing for an independent foreign policy. That is why politically at economically, aalamin po namin ang mga updates ukol sa anumang mga pag-uusap at mga kaganapan na magbibigay po ng direksiyon sana sa ating foreign policies upang hindi economically, culturally at politically ay nadedehado tayo.

So with that, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Sponsor, gusto ko na rin po—kanina po may mga data na puwedeng hingin sa ahensiya, hihingin ko na lang po later—pero nagpapasalamat po ako sa pagkakataon.

Magandang hapon po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker with cordial and convivial cooperation and understanding from the Gentleman from the BUHAY Party-List and from the First District of Albay, I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman for his interpellation. So I move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Floor Leader. Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. COJUANGCO. Hopefully, a few, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I have no questions with respect to the nitty-gritty and totality of the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs. I think within the budgetary constraints, it is reasonable. Moreover, the Department of Foreign Affairs has its own earnings which could augment its appropriations. I would limit myself to policy questions, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

“An independent foreign policy” is per se, a mere motherhood statement. The Duterte administration has to disclose and explain what actually is its independent foreign policy. May we know, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what are the core parameters and thrusts of President Duterte’s independent foreign policy?

REP. COJUANGCO. One moment please.

Mr. Speaker, the context of an independent foreign policy is to pursue a foreign policy that supports and enhances national interests. If there is no conflict between that interest with another country’s foreign policy, then we pursue the strengthening of that relationship. If there is an issue that affects the discourse of a continued healthy foreign relationship with another country, then we build on the strengths, and negotiate and work for the resolution of those differences.

REP. LAGMAN. Is that all, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor? In other words, what are the fundamentals of an independent foreign policy?

REP. COJUANGCO. A foreign policy must have the sole purpose of making sure that paramount national interest is upheld versus a policy that will simply cater to the interests of other nations. There are some interests—when our interests and those of other nations converge, then, there is nothing wrong with pursuing this as long as it does not undermine the paramount national interest.

REP. LAGMAN. Would the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, agree that there are three fundamentals in an independent foreign policy? First, the approach of policy must favor the country’s fundamental interest or national interest, which you have already stated. Second, it must adhere to national and international law.

Would you agree to that statement, Your Honor?

REP. COJUANGCO. Can you repeat the statement, please?

REP. LAGMAN. Second, the policy must adhere to national and international laws.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Lastly, it must be accomplished in the least costly manner. Is that correct?

REP. COJUANGCO. That is subjective, Your Honor, given the dynamics of the world we live in today and the nature of the issue that has to be resolved.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, but given the options of national interest and compliance with national and international laws, then the policy should be pursued without much expenditure or expense on the part of the government. I think that is fundamental.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, is alienating traditional economic partners and security allies while embarking on new relationships with other countries, a thrust of President Duterte’s independent foreign policy?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. So, the distinguished Sponsor admits that alienating traditional economic allies and security partners is a component of President Duterte’s independent foreign policy.

REP. COJUANGCO. Not intentionally to alienate our long-standing allies and in fact, it is to maintain the existing treaties and relationship and at the same time endeavor to explore new possibilities of alliances or mending soured relationships with other potential allies in our geopolitical area.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, of course, maintaining traditional economic and security alliances with existing partners is not contradictory to embarking on or forging new relationships, is it not correct, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is why an independent foreign policy must be balanced and pragmatic, and not static. We must be flexible in our endeavor, sometimes even flexible in our discourse, provided that the fundamental direction which is the interest of our country and for the welfare of our people, is maintained.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, can the Philippines pursue an independent foreign policy without squandering its hard-end advantageous relationship with countries like the United States and the European community?

REP. COJUANGCO. I think that if we will look at our country and where it is economically in this day and age, we have been long-time allies with our American

and European friends. Maybe what the President endeavors to undertake is to explore the possibilities with nontraditional allies in our geopolitical area.

REP. LAGMAN. That is not a problem, exploring new relationships just like in human relationship. The problem is, is it correct to squander, to alienate economic and security allies of long standing just because we are pursuing new alliances with other countries?

REP. COJUANGCO. I understand the concern of the honorable Gentleman. This is a healthy discussion, but I think before we can say that our President is squandering the long, good standing relationships with our traditional allies, I think our traditional allies will also let us know, as a sign of respect, whether we are approaching or reaching a tipping point.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, recent events and recent occurrences would point to the contrary, but let me leave that point.

We have a Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States. We have the Visiting Forces Agreement as well as the EDCA. These are all existing agreements to which the Philippines is a state party. Pursuant to one of the fundamentals of an independent foreign policy, we must respect international law and according to our Constitution, these international covenants would be part of our legal system. Is that correct?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Under the Mutual Defense Agreement with the United States or the Visiting Forces Agreement or the EDCA, or anyone of them, is the Philippines obligated to join the United States in the military exercises?

REP. COJUANGCO. It is not an obligation, but it is a decision we jointly make in the Mutual Defense Board.

REP. LAGMAN. So there is nothing in these Agreements which would constrain the Philippines to join the United States in military exercises here in the Pacific or elsewhere, for that matter.

REP. COJUANGCO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Personally, I am against the Visiting Forces Agreement and the EDCA. I have made statements before of my opposition to these two Agreements, but as long as these are valid and existing Agreements, then we will have to respect them as part of our foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the promotion and protection of human rights is a universal agenda. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The transgression of human rights in one country is a global concern for all other countries. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Is it because of the universality of human rights that there is an International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, these constitute what is known as the International Bill of Rights. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. COJUANGCO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the Philippines a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

REP. COJUANGCO. We are a partner to all basic conventions on human rights, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. These conventions obligate countries that have ratified the treaties to protect and preserve basic human rights. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Human rights are rights inherent in all human beings without distinction as to race, color, gender, language, religion, political persuasion, social origin, birth, or other status, the foremost of which is the right to life. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The promotion and protection of human rights is one of the fundamental goals of the United Nations which works actively in defining, helping implement and monitor International Human Rights standards worldwide. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. There is an office under the United Nations known as the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. To fulfill its comprehensive human rights mandate, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights speaks out objectively in the face of human rights violations worldwide. Will the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, agree to this statement?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. International human rights law lays down obligations which states are bound to respect. By becoming parties to international treaties, states assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, protect and fulfill human rights. Does the distinguished Sponsor agree to this statement, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. In general, yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. It is for this antecedent and reason that the United Nations and its officials are gravely concerned about the unabated extrajudicial killings of drug suspects in the Philippines as they relate to perceived or actual human rights violations. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Based on what I have read and heard, I believe that is the basis of their pronouncements, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Then, is it correct for the good Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs to tell the United Nations that the world should not interfere in President Duterte's crackdown on crime?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, it is correct, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, be that as it may, that the nature of the activity is an internal matter which is connected to our national interest.

REP. LAGMAN. After the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, agreed to the antecedent propositions that the protection and enhancement of human rights is a global concern, that the parties to international agreements on human rights are obligated to respect and promote human rights, and the United Nations is concerned with its goal in the promotion and protection of human rights, would the distinguished Sponsor still insist that the statement of the good Secretary before the United Nations that other countries must not interfere in President Duterte's crackdown on crime is correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because it is still consistent with our commitment to treaties such as transnational crime and anti-drug protocols. It is an internal matter of the Philippines, in our national interest, because of the rampant and growing negative effect of the illicit drug trade vis-à-vis its effect to our society. For as long as the Philippine government pursues this within our national and universal laws, including human rights, I think the pronouncements of our Foreign Secretary at the UN General Assembly are appropriate. Bear in mind that the authorities, as they try to pursue and apprehend these criminal suspects, there have been already numerous presentations that the primary reasons for the rise in these EKJs is that the suspects may be high on drugs or are desperate to escape the hand of the law and thus, put up a fight and tried to shoot their way to escape. That, I am sure, contributes to the statistics.

REP. LAGMAN. So the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, is saying that the government can continue its campaign to decimate the drug menace even at the expense of human rights, the rule of law, and due process. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. To this day, we are not aware of our authorities being proven to have violated any law or any human right in their quest for investigating and rooting out the drug syndicates in the country.

It is a national policy that we have a war on drugs. That is why it is heartwarming to know that there have been 700,000 surrenderees. These are people who have tried or bought or have even, on occasion, dealt with drugs, but have decided in their best interest to reform. The victims of the EJKs numbering about, maybe 4,000, are but a minute representation of that overall figure.

That statement of this Representation is not to justify the correctness of killing even one person, but this is merely to illustrate a point that it is not a policy of the government to trample on the human rights of our citizens.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, saying that 4,000 dead bodies of suspected drug traffickers and criminals is a minimal, a minute proportion?

REP. COJUANGCO. If I may add, Mr. Speaker, a big portion, maybe one-half of that figure, is suspected to be the perpetrated acts of the criminal syndicates themselves in silencing potential leakages in their organizations, or getting back at people who have returned to the fold of the law.

REP. LAGMAN. Even granting, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that those killed in the deadly

drug campaign are indeed drug traffickers and users, are they not entitled to due process of law instead of being summarily executed?

REP. COJUANGCO. I think the conclusion that all of these people had been summarily executed is an unfair statement at this time. I think our Philippine National Police and our concerned agencies are continuing to investigate these killings, evidence has been gathered and the legal processes on these are in fact proceeding.

REP. LAGMAN. We are bombarded daily by television broadcasts showing orphans and widows of those killed for being suspected as drug traffickers or addicts, and this grim scenario reported by media is unchallenged by government. That is why there is serious concern that these killings should be stopped because the drug problem is not only a police problem, it is a health problem as well as a poverty issue, which other countries have considered. The violent campaign against the drug menace has failed in Thailand and in the United States and other countries.

Is the distinguished Sponsor aware of those failures, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, some of those strategies implemented in other countries have different outcomes or different results, maybe even different methodologies were implemented. However, to answer the Gentleman's point, Mr. Speaker, for as long as these killings are not overtly state-sponsored and are being investigated, we should also temper our criticism due to the fact that the media sometimes also add or enhance these stories to generate more news.

REP. LAGMAN. That is a judgment statement, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, but who else are the killers if not the police and the vigilantes?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, as we were discussing earlier, a certain number of those victims or not victims but a certain number of the EJKs are admittedly done by the PNP and other agencies. However, this is done in the course of their mandate to apprehend these criminal elements. It is not by intention that they seek and destroy these people. We can even go as far as saying that in their quest to apprehend these suspects, they have had to use means to protect themselves or to protect their lives, after which the unfortunate incident happens.

REP. LAGMAN. There are pages and tapes, so numerous to count, reporting that the victims were unarmed, they were already surrendering and yet they were still liquidated or killed. I think all of us Members of the House are aware of this grim reportage.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. That is why the Philippine National Police is also putting, I would say, equal emphasis on rooting out the sources of the so-called vigilante killings because as a matter of policy, they are against these extrajudicial killings.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. The good Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs was quoted as having said before the United States officials and relating the true situation in the Philippines. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what is the true situation in the Philippines which this good Secretary recounted to his American audience?

REP. COJUANGCO. The government recognizes that there are extrajudicial killings. However, these are not done, or the government maintains that these are not done by our law enforcers. Even those killings which the Gentleman referred to as vigilante are also already being investigated. It is a matter of policy and it is the government's policy to respect human rights.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. In other words, the good Secretary told his American audience that the true situation in the Philippines is that the extrajudicial killings are not the handiwork of police officers and policemen. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Whenever the incidence of a killing happens, the incident is thoroughly investigated regardless of whether it was done by the PNP or the vigilantes. It is very hard to expect realistically that in a war, in any war, there are no, what we would call, inadvertent casualties. Not to justify again, Mr. Speaker, any killing but just to try to elucidate the point that these things happen and for as long as our government does not make it a policy and goes after the erring agents of government, I think it is a sound policy given on our war on drugs.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, said that these killings were officially investigated. May we know whether the good Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs was equipped with the necessary results of these investigations when he went to the United States and when he addressed the United Nations?

REP. COJUANGCO. One moment, please. Mr. Speaker, it is not the honorable Secretary who is investigating these. It is under the purview of other agencies, like the PNP, even us here in Congress, we investigate to try to find out what has happened; and so the pronouncements of our Secretary at the UN are based on information available to him at that time he made those statements.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I regret that that answer begs my question. My question is, since the Secretary said that that this not the true situation, and since the Sponsor said that these killings have been officially investigated, my question is—was the Secretary equipped with the results of the investigation to say that that is not the true situation; is this the true situation?

REP. COJUANGCO. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if you react to a statement, and you say, based on media reports, you are reacting to a statement from the media, but if you want to have more, to give a more credible statement, then would you not say, you would have to investigate more, dig deeper, wait for more comprehensive information.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I am just relying on the statement, Mr. Speaker, of the distinguished Sponsor, that these killings have been investigated and I was just asking whether the Secretary was privy to the results of the investigation. I am not saying that the Secretary is the person or authority to make the investigations, but let me leave that point. I think Members of the House would be able to analyze the answers of the distinguished Sponsor, as coached by the good Secretary. The good Secretary said that he dissuaded the United States officials from basing judgment on unverified reports. What is meant by the Secretary when he says “unverified reports”?

REP. COJUANGCO. Even the representatives of the Human Rights Commission abroad should not base their findings on news or media reports. They should come to the Philippines and conduct a more thorough analysis to get a better appreciation of the true situation on the ground. So, I think, that is what some of the statements of the Secretary were meant to address.

REP. LAGMAN. Did the good Secretary make his own verification of these unabated extrajudicial killings or he simply was relying on the concept that media reports are not reliable?

REP. COJUANGCO. The Secretary was merely emphasizing to the audience abroad that if they could gather more evidence to appreciate better the true situation here in the Philippines rather than jumping to conclusions based on media reports.

REP. LAGMAN. My last point, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is the good Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs endorsing the coming of the United Nations officials ...

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. ... to investigate these killings?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your honor, if it is their pleasure to do so.

REP. LAGMAN. Under unrestrained and free conditions?

REP. COJUANGCO. Subject to proper protocols and procedures, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for accommodating the questions of this Representation and, again, I endorse the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I would like, once again, to thank the honorable Gentlemen from BUHAY Party-List and the First District of Albay for their kind understanding.

So, I move to recognize the Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr. for his interpellations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Dep. Majority Leader.

Honorable Sponsor, on the part of BUHAY Party-List which I represent, which is nationwide in coverage, we would like to manifest that we are happy with the performance of the good Secretary who is now heading the Department of Foreign Affairs. We are happy with the way our OFWs are attended to now. We are happy with the way our people are given quality attention in our passport requirements as a right of every Filipino. And we are very happy with the way he stirs our nation towards very rough waters in our foreign relations. If we were led by an irresponsible leader or a biased partisan leader in our foreign affairs, we would be developing more problems. Marami po tayong mga issue at mga katanungan na kinakailangang hawakang pangkalahatan, and we believe that the good Secretary and his leadership, with his team, have done very well. Especially today, we have another issue burning. The President has issued a statement that the killing of 3,000 drug addicts and drug pushers is nothing compared or, rather, similar to the killing of six million Jews as part of our history.

So, alam po namin at naintindihan namin ang nangyayari ngayon and we urge all our Members to continue supporting the leadership of the Secretary

and his team. While we support, I hear everybody's supporting President Duterte, so we must support his alter ego in foreign relations.

With that, we have no more questions and we are happy with what is going on in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Tomasito "Tom" S. Villarín of the AKBAYAN Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Honorable Villarín is recognized.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

Well, I would like to propound my issues and concerns on the three pillars of the Philippine foreign policy, as follows: first is the preservation and enhancement of national security; second, promotion and attainment of economic security; third is the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare and interest of Filipinos overseas. So, are these three pillars still the guideposts of our foreign policy, Your Honor?

REP. COJUANGCO. I think they are integral elements of what was discussed earlier.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, on the issue of national security, Your Honor, just recently, we had these Indonesians caught in our airport possessing Philippine passports, 177 I think, if that was the number. As a matter of policy, how are we secure in our passports?

REP. COJUANGCO. Your Honor, you are referring to the case of the Hajj passports issued to non-Philippine nationals?

REP. VILLARIN. I think that is the case.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. But, do we have two passports—a regular passport and a Hajj passport?

REP. COJUANGCO. The Hajj passport is

specifically issued to Filipino Hajj participants. Once they make their pilgrimage and they return to the country, the passport is no longer valid.

REP. VILLARIN. So, this is not the same as our regular passport being issued.

REP. COJUANGCO. Different po.

REP. VILLARIN. So, different?

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo.

REP. VILLARIN. And, in a year's time, every year, because our Muslim Filipinos make a pilgrimage to Mecca, so we issue how many Hajj passports?

REP. COJUANGCO. Generally po, the allocation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is 5,000 Hajj passports.

REP. VILLARIN. Five thousand Hajj passports. And, these Hajj passports, how easily one can get a Hajj passport?

REP. COJUANGCO. This year, it will be increased to 8,000. The way to get it is you have to be certified by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. They are tasked with doing the background check for the applicants, of which the certification is brought to the DFA, and then from there, it is processed. It is processed for the issuance of the Hajj passport.

REP. VILLARIN. So, with a Hajj passport, can you travel to any ASEAN country without getting a visa?

REP. COJUANGCO. Only to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specifically.

REP. VILLARIN. So, this is from Manila or the Philippines going straight to Saudi Arabia.

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. Now, I think there was this plan, this proposal to outsource the making of the passports from the NPO, from the National Printing Office to a private or a semi-private agency. Is this plan still being pursued?

REP. COJUANGCO. The passports, being very sensitive government documents, were printed by the Central Bank Printing Office. However, the DFA was informed some time ago that the Central Bank could no longer accommodate this function, so the DFA sought a private contractor.

Sorry, I correct myself. The DFA sought another recognized and accredited government printer, and that is the APO Printing.

REP. VILLARIN. The name of that recognized contractor is ...

REP. COJUANGCO. APO, A-P-O.

REP. VILLARIN. APO, and APO is a government or semi-government agency. Was this created ...

REP. COJUANGCO. It is a GOCC under the Presidential Communications Operations Office.

REP. VILLARIN. So, it is a GOCC under the PCOO.

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo.

REP. VILLARIN. So, this is still being pursued and our passports—I think we have to issue annually five million, if I am not mistaken, passports or ...

REP. COJUANGCO. Between 3 to 3.5 million passports a year po.

REP. VILLARIN. So, 3 to 3.5 million passports, and we have to renew that every...

REP. COJUANGCO. At present po, it is every five years po.

REP. VILLARIN. Five years. So, do you have any plans that instead of five years, we can extend that to 10 years?

REP. COJUANGCO. We will have to debate, discuss and pass legislation for that to be effected po.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

I would go now to the second pillar, on economic security. Will the DFA confirm the statement made by the former Foreign Affairs Secretary that there was, I think, in the past three, four years, there was \$4 billion in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) that was committed or is being given to the Philippines, \$4 billion in the ODA?

REP. COJUANGCO. Can you please specify or be more detailed in—from what year to what year, and from which donor, country or organization?

REP. VILLARIN. Well, this was a statement made by the Foreign Secretary in a public forum, and it was

reported in the newspapers that the Philippines, since 2011, will be a recipient of \$4 billion in the ODA. So, if it is the ODA, it could come from the multilateral development institutions, financial institutions. It could come from the ODA of countries, like the US, Australia and Europe.

REP. COJUANGCO. That is overall po, the total ODA funds and from approximately the period of 2011—sorry, the last three years, so 2013 to 2016.

REP. VILLARIN. So, 2013. Now that we are entering into trade agreements, and there is this trade agreement with the European Union, and we are about to get a total of \$800 million of GSP, the generalized system of preference given to trading partners, developing countries like the Philippines and the EU? Would the Gentleman confirm that there would be this amount, \$800 million, of GSP trade agreements?

REP. COJUANGCO. That is just an estimate. We can neither confirm nor deny that amount; it is just an estimate.

REP. VILLARIN. Would the Gentleman agree, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that with our trade agreements, some of which, I think, have not yet been signed with the EU? Could we benefit from these trade agreements?

REP. COJUANGCO. We could benefit as it is a form of tax savings, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. This is in the form of the reduction in tariffs and import cost. So, if you look at this ODA and this GSP, the trade agreements that we are entering into with Japan, Europe, Australia—is the Department aware that many of these ODAs have conditionalities, and specific conditionalities would include that the country would strictly follow the rule of law and it would respect human rights?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Gentleman is correct. This assistance is predicated on our country and their country agreeing on certain conditions to happen, and if those conditions are not met, then there is the possibility of losing that assistance.

REP. VILLARIN. So, that would be an adverse situation wherein we would lose P4 billion, then a potential of \$800 million and, of course, we also have this US military assistance of around \$160 million. So, if these conditionalities are not met, we would lose all these funds, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. The ODA is separate from

the defense assistance, and I am sure we will not—the government will not get into an agreement fully knowing from the start that we will be at a disadvantage.

REP. VILLARIN. I am raising that, Mr. Speaker, because, of course, it is to our interest that the attainment of economic security, being one of the foremost of the three pillars, that would also be for our interest in terms of pursuing our foreign policy. So, if we do not comply with international obligations and, of course, some of the conditionalities, and I think the universal conditionalities, respect for human rights and rule of law—I would just like to make that point, Mr. Speaker.

Now, on the third pillar, Mr. Speaker, I would propound some concerns with regard to our migrant workers. In the tasks of the DFA, one of which is to administer a Legal Assistance Fund for migrant workers, can this Representation know how much is the Legal Assistance Fund for 2017?

REP. COJUANGCO. It is P100 million, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. P300 million?

REP. COJUANGCO. No, P100 million.

REP. VILLARIN. So, it is P100 million, not dollars.

REP. COJUANGCO. Pesos po.

REP. VILLARIN. Pesos, okay.

We have around 15,000 Filipinos in Saudi Arabia affected by a slump in oil production. Of course, we all know that these 15,000 Filipinos could increase if the price of crude oil would still not rise beyond the current price. Does the Gentleman think that the P100 million in that fund is enough for the needs of our overseas workers?

REP. COJUANGCO. It is quite impossible to predict whether that will be an exact amount given the fact that it is a contingency. There is another fund, which is P400 million, and that is for the assistance to nationals' funds and that would include things other than legal assistance.

REP. VILLARIN. So, P400 million. And this comes from the PAGCOR or what agency?

REP. COJUANGCO. That is from the GAA.

REP. VILLARIN. GAA, but does the DFA get funds from other agencies, GOCCs?

REP. COJUANGCO. No, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. So, there is no fund coming from the PAGCOR going to ...

REP. COJUANGCO. The DFA also generates some income due to their consular services...

REP. VILLARIN. So, these are their only source of funds?

REP. COJUANGCO. ...and the GAA. Some of these assistance funds also roll over from one fiscal year to the next.

REP. VILLARIN. This is being rolled over. If it is not spent, so this is rolled over.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. So, the P400 million is an accumulated fund from ...

REP. COJUANGCO. It can be rolled over only for one year po. As an example po, from January to July of this year, they are around 48 percent already. So, we still cannot tell if they will have excess funds for this fund because we do not know if, in the last six months, there will be a spike in the need for assistance.

REP. VILLARIN. So, are we given the assurance, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, indeed, if there is a need to address the concerns of our OFWs, the funds now with the DFA are already enough or substantially enough to address the concerns of our OFWs?

REP. COJUANGCO. Based on the expenditure by the Department in the last two years, the funds seemed adequate. However, Congress, in our wisdom, may always appropriate more for next year's GAB as we see fit.

REP. VILLARIN. Of course, there is also the P2.5 billion fund under the Office of the President that could also be utilized. Would that be also a source, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, that could be a source. However, given the magnitude and the scope of the different areas that the President addresses, it would be more prudent not to rely on that fund.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In this case, with regard to the specific budget of DFA, much of the funds go to the OSEC, the Office of the Secretary, and it is stated here that for 2017, there was a 15.8-percent reduction.

REP. COJUANGCO. No, it is 19.87 po.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. So, 19.87 percent.

REP. COJUANGCO. Reduction?

REP. VILLARIN. Reduction.

REP. COJUANGCO. In the budget of the OSEC?

REP. VILLARIN. My concern, Mr. Speaker, would be, well, because of our pursuit of an independent foreign policy, the need for our good Secretary and many of our envoys to explain the side of the Philippine government with regard to the utterances made by our President—does he think that with the reduction in the budget under the OSEC, this will be enough to mobilize a public relations campaign or a campaign that would, in a way, make us or portray what is the real situation in our country? Or should I say, would the budget be enough for our consular offices to mobilize and inform the world that, indeed, the Philippines is not what the government is saying or, as our Presidential Communications Office is saying, hindi daw naipapakita ang true picture? Would the budget still be enough?

REP. COJUANGCO. I think, given the budget presented, the DFA and its leadership feel confident that they can accomplish the tasks of their Department. They have put aside certain expenditures as a result of the reduction in their budget. So, meaning to say, they are an agency that has prioritized their main focus.

REP. VILLARIN. I am just stating that, Mr. Speaker, because I know that we need a very good public relations campaign in light of what has come out, not just in international media, but of course local media, and of course the interest that is being generated by the colorful character of our President.

Now, on my last point, Mr. Speaker, in our Foreign Service Act, it states here that 51 percent of envoys should be career appointees, meaning, it should come from the career service, and 49 percent would be political envoys. How many of our 19 regional consular offices, and 94 foreign service posts are occupied by career officials, Mr. Speaker?

REP. COJUANGCO. Approximately, 40 are career, and about eight are political appointees.

REP. VILLARIN. So, it goes beyond the required 51 percent.

REP. COJUANGCO. Which one goes beyond the 51 percent?

REP. VILLARIN. That 51 percent of the total envoys should be from the career service?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. I am glad to note that because we have been professionalizing the appointment in our foreign service and that has been a policy of the past administrations. It is good to know that this is still being continued, so there are no moves to appoint more political envoys in our DFA. Is this Representation assured of that?

REP. COJUANGCO. It would be difficult to assure the Gentleman of that, at this time, because that it is the prerogative of the Executive.

REP. VILLARIN. But of course, we also have a law to be followed. I mean, you still have that more than 51 percent rule, so it is still safe to assume that.

REP. COJUANGCO. We can assure the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that the 51 percent ceiling or below the 51 percent will be followed.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, Mr. Speaker, those are my questions. I thank the distinguished Sponsor for elucidating my questions and giving the answers that would give Congress a chance to say that the budget of DFA is really worth supporting.

So, thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize our Minority Leader, Danilo E. Suarez, of the Third District of Quezon for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Minority Leader, the Honorable Suarez, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor, who happens to be the son of my good friend and political boss, be willing to yield to some minor clarificatory questions?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I am reviewing the mandate of the DFA: “preservation and enhancement of national security; promotion and attainment of economic security; protection of the rights; and promotion of the welfare of overseas Filipinos.” Plus, there is also the promotion of culture and the Philippine image.

May we know what is this promotion of Philippine culture and Philippine image, distinguished Sponsor. Is this the Bayanihan?

REP. COJUANGCO. That includes the Bayanihan po.

REP. SUAREZ. Are they giving financial assistance to the Bayanihan?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, they occasionally deploy or send the performers abroad.

REP. SUAREZ. For big occasions and ...

REP. COJUANGCO. Like in Europe, ...

REP. SUAREZ. I see.

REP. COJUANGCO. ... if they have a tour.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, the Gentleman just touched a soft spot in the heart of one of my deputies, distinguished Sponsor, because Bayanihan has long been a byword, hindi po ba?

You must have a base where you get good dancers kasi may science po naman iyang pagsasayaw. Hindi ho ito naman ordinary, na kukunin mo lang iyan sa isang bayan, siyudad o barangay. That is precisely the reason we are saying, we are reducing the budget of a certain office by a dramatic slash of, I think, 70 percent of what was proposed.

REP. COJUANGCO. It is 19 percent po.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon po iyong culture na sinasabi kahapon ni Congressman Atienza. I mean, we are not saying that mali po iyong program because hindi ho naman si Secretary Yasay ang nag-prepare nito. So, ang point ko lang, sa mga susunod po nating appropriation, siguro, this is some shortfall or oversight on the part of the preparation for the 2017 Budget. Kung binibigyan natin ng importansya itong promotion of Philippine culture and Philippine image, we must have a good base of future artists that we can present during international activities. Iyon lang ho ang observation namin dito. So, we are not even expecting a reply from the distinguished Sponsor. We are just saying our observation.

Now, when we say “protection of rights” and “promotion of the overseas workers,” I understand this must be worldwide. Am I correct there? Lahat po ng bansa na tayo ay mayroong overseas workers ay mayroon po tayong opisyal ng DFA na nangangalaga sa kanilang kalagayan. Am I correct there, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo. However, there are some regions or subregions that are covered by one main consular office and then those personnel who are ...

REP. SUAREZ. Ito po ba ay lateral dito sa Department of Labor na mayroon din silang opisina na nag-aalaga rin ng katayuan ng ating OCW?

REP. COJUANGCO. Not all, Mr. Speaker, but in most of the sensitive countries that we have a greater deployment of citizens and OFWs, that is where there is a lateral deployment of labor.

REP. SUAREZ. They are having their office under the same roof.

REP. COJUANGCO. Building. Building po.

REP. SUAREZ. Opo. Magkakasama po sila.

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong promotion and welfare, mayroon po tayong term na tinatawag na “blood money,” hindi po ba? Iyon po bang DFA ay may mga panahon na tumutulong o kung hindi man, ano hong ahensiya ng pamahalaan ang kino-coordinate ng DFA when we mention the term “blood money”?

REP. COJUANGCO. With regard to the blood money po, the DFA does not expend any ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, wala po tayong allocation or sinasabi nating ...

REP. COJUANGCO. None. They just ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, ibahong ahensiya ang tumutulong.

REP. COJUANGCO. Hindi po. They just assist the family in making representation for sponsors to contribute or donate the funds for the use of blood money.

REP. SUAREZ. I see, because if I can remember it right, during the term of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, we set aside a sizeable amount of money coming from certain offices as assistance to those workers in distress na kailangan po ang blood money. Because if you look at the numerical figure of what is required, imposible po talaga namang kayang bayaran noong ating mga manggagawa o workers na nagkaproblema wherein blood money seems to be the only possible solution.

So, would I assume, distinguished Sponsor, na lahat na—ilang bansa po tayo mayroong kuwan, may chancellor o ilang bansa po tayo mayroong opisina ang DFA?

REP. COJUANGCO. Sixty embassies and approximately 20 plus consulates.

REP. SUAREZ. So, mga 80 worldwide.

REP. COJUANGCO. Eighty-four po.

REP. SUAREZ. And there are some countries with some satellite offices. Am I correct?

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes po.

REP. SUAREZ. Especially America, siguro po ganoon? Mayroon sa California ...

REP. COJUANGCO. Mexico, Central America.

REP. SUAREZ. I see. I do not mean to be rude or insulting, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, but how do we rate our foreign workers working in the staff of the DFA as compared to other countries, in terms of salaries, allowances, housing, et cetera?

REP. COJUANGCO. Is the honorable Gentleman asking on what is the system of the DFA for rating or ...

REP. SUAREZ. I am asking comparative salary standards. Or how do we compare ourselves? Let us say that I will talk of a specific country, kumusta po iyong sahod ng isang embassy employee ng Malaysia as compared with an embassy official ng Pilipinas, in terms of salaries and allowances?

REP. COJUANGCO. I think the salaries of our Foreign Affairs personnel are in line with the cost of living at their posting.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi po naman sila kasama—kasama po ba sila sa standardization, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. COJUANGCO. There is a basic salary in the country. When the personnel are deployed abroad, then there is an adjustment.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, what the Minority's position, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, is this: They represent the country and it pains us, Members of this plenary Body, na iyong atin pong buhay ng manggagawa ay miserable. Kaya ang gusto ko hong malaman, are they working in comfort? Kasi kung hindi ka ho comfortable at naghihikahos ka ho, how can you present the country when, in fact, you are representing the Philippines? Ikaw po ang tao doon e, hindi po ba?

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo, opo. They are ...

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon ho ang itinatanong ko. How

are we compared with other countries in terms of working condition?

REP. COJUANGCO. They are living in comfort but not in obscene luxury.

REP. SUAREZ. Meaning, instead of Mercedes, they use Toyota. Ganoon po ba ang sinasabi ninyo?

REP. COJUANGCO. They use Toyota. In fact, the reflecting program was scrapped to fit the budget due to the catch made.

REP. SUAREZ. Their budget, distinguished Sponsor, is lower than the previous year. Am I correct?

REP. COJUANGCO. Opo, by about 19 percent.

REP. SUAREZ. May I know the rationale behind the slash.

REP. COJUANGCO. Maybe we should ask the previous President.

REP. SUAREZ. Wala po silang idea kung bakit napaka-dramatic naman noong slash?

REP. COJUANGCO. Well, I guess, indirectly, the budget for hosting the ASEAN conference next year has been transferred to the Office of the President.

REP. SUAREZ. Ay, iyon pong—kasi P2.9 billion lang po ang budget ng OP, gagawin po nating P17 billion, I think, ano, because of the ASEAN next year that we will be hosting.

REP. COJUANGCO. For hosting po, the expenditure is at around P15 billion, so that was moved.

REP. SUAREZ. Yes, that is what we are saying. We are expecting to spend, at least, P15 billion for the ASEAN. Can you ask the principal, distinguished Sponsor, kasi kasama na po diyan iyong inter-parliamentary and iyan din po ay kasabay na gaganapin sa atin, ito pong mga counterparts natin sa Kongreso at Parliament. So, ang question ko, sino ho ang gagastos noong sa Kongreso at saka sa Parliament na ating counterpart sa ibang ASEAN countries?

REP. COJUANGCO. To my knowledge po, most of the expenditures will be covered by the fund with the OP.

REP. SUAREZ. So, it will be the Office of the President.

REP. COJUANGCO. Yes, po.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I have experienced in some countries wherein—kasi matagal-tagal na rin po akong Congressman. Kung may mga official trips po ako sometimes sa—even without me asking, I am somewhat surprised that there are times na bigla hong may sasalubong sa amin na empleyado ng embassy, kahit na hindi ho kami humihingi ng assistance, bigla hong dumarating doon at sinasabi na, “Nalaman po namin na darating kayo Congressman, kaya nandito ho kami para tumulong.” And I hope that practice, that harmonious relationship between the Department and Congress on the request budget of the new Secretary for 2017, baka ma-improve pa ng kaunti para maging mas harmonious iyong relation ng Congress at saka ng DFA.

REP. COJUANGCO. Noted po.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the Minority has no more question to raise on the proposed budget, and we thereby, would like to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a joint motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs. *(Applause)*

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a couple of minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is suspended.

It was 4:49 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:51 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Romero “Miro” S. Quimbo presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Minority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The honorable Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, I move that we reconsider the earlier motion of the Minority in connection with the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a motion. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. The motion, Mr. Speaker, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). Yes, the Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. ... is to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the DFA and its attached agencies. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). Order. There is a motion. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The session is suspended.

It was 4:52 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:02 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE POSTAL CORPORATION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, we are now considering

House Bill No. 3408, and the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of interpellation and debate. I move that we begin the consideration of the Budgetary Support to Government Corporations, mainly, the Philippine Postal Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize—before I recognize the Honorable Tony Bravo, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Philippine Postal Corporation. These are Joel L. Otarra, OIC-Postmaster General; Luis D. Carlos, Assistant Postmaster General for Marketing; and Lorna M. Guevarra, Department Manager. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The guests from the Philippine Postal Corporation will please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Sandoval to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Philippine Postal Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Honorable Federico “*Love Boy*” “*Ricky*” S. Sandoval II is recognized. You have the floor.

REP. SANDOVAL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I would like to ask this august Body to consider the budget of PHLPost.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo Ph.D. for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Honorable Bravo, the champion of the cooperative movement, is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Minority, there being no member of the Minority who wishes to ask questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of Philippine Postal Corporation.

I do so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the

Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Postal Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a joint motion. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chairs hears none, the motion is approved.

REP. SANDOVAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. I move to suspend for one minute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a motion to suspend, but before we do so—talk about a very fast postal service.

The session is suspended.

It was 5:04 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:08 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a motion. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Before we start, I would like to acknowledge the presence of guests in the gallery: Sec. Regina “*Gina*” Paz L. Lopez, Usec. Demetrio L. Ignacio Jr., Usec. Leo L. Jasareno, Usec. Isabelo R. Montejo, Usec. Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Usec. Mario Luis J. Jacinto, Usec. Ernesto D. Adobo Jr., Usec. Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Assistant Secretaries, Heads of attached agencies; all Regional Directors of the DENR, Environmental Management Bureau, and Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The DENR family is welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the DENR, including attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The most beautiful Governor from the First District of Davao Oriental, the Hon. Cora Malanyaon, is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF
REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, honorable Members of the House of Representatives, isang makakalikasang hapon sa ating lahat.

This Representation is honored and privileged to present for consideration the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for fiscal year 2017. The budget of the DENR is anchored on an enhanced development framework crafted to align with the priorities of the national leadership that is bringing real and meaningful change by fighting poverty and corruption. As such, the DENR's broader goals aim to achieve the interrelated outcomes of human well-being and environment quality for the benefit of every Filipino, even those yet unborn.

Your Honors, the DENR family, led by Secretary Regina "Gina" Lopez, are present and in full force today to seek the august Body's approval of its P29.3 billion budget for 2017, which they intend to implement across their programs, projects, and activities. The said amount will be allocated to programs which will benefit from an institutionalized partnership with civil society organizations and will showcase an area development approach for priority areas not just to deliver services but to improve the quality of life of the DENR's clients.

Mr. Speaker, this Representation is now ready to answer questions for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo Ph.D. of COOP-NATCCO for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The honorable Congressman Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Majority Leader.

Will the Lady Sponsor yield to some interpellations from this Representation?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Lady Sponsor.

Before I propound my questions, I would like to first bring this to the attention of the good Secretary of the DENR. I received a complaint, in 2014, involving some quarters in the DENR, specifically, the CENRO—Region VII. The subject in question is a parcel of land located in Tejero, Jagna, Bohol, which was originally owned by Lamberto Achacoso, the patriarch of Achacoso clan, Lot No. 5996. This issue was raised before the former Secretary and we actually requested that the matter be investigated. But to my dismay, the issue was just dribbled and got no fair treatment.

In view of this, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, distinguished Sponsor, I would like to request the new Secretary to conduct an investigation and review the case for it is really the property of the Achacoso family and heirs and not of that fabled parties as decided by the CENRO, and further, to determine the criminal and administrative liabilities of all personnel involved in the erroneous and malicious decision to the prejudice of the real owners, the Achacoso family and heirs.

Will this be acted favorably, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for that assurance.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Your Honor, I think there is a need for you to prepare a letter and submit it to the DENR.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I will do that, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. But, I am asking for an assurance that an investigation will be conducted by the good Secretary.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that assurance, Mr. Speaker and distinguished Sponsor.

May I proceed. Just one particular issue, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, because I have heard a while ago that it is in the heart of the good Secretary to really address the poverty threshold of our countrymen. Am I correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Along that line, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I would like to introduce amendments, come the proper time, but I would like to raise this now.

Under No. 5 of the Special Provision, National Greening Program, wherein the amount of P3,687,646,000 appropriated therein under Forest Development and Rehabilitation Protection, shall be used for the National Greening Program purposes wherein P3 billion will be for maintenance covering prior years, planting activities and site preparation, and P300 million will be for seedling activities.

With this, I would like to recommend, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that at least 15 percent of this amount be allocated to farmers' cooperative wherein you outsource your seedlings. Is it possible, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, that is possible because the beneficiaries are the people's organizations too.

REP. BRAVO (A.). But, I would like to recommend that that assurance be made part of the amendment to this provision because, as it is done at the DepEd, 15 percent for the procurement of materials and for the procurement of armchairs when awarded, specifically it was stated in the Special Provisions of the DepEd for the benefit of the cooperatives, and we could do the same. I am recommending the same.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is possible, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). With that, I am—is this an assurance coming ...

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is an acceptance.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ... from the distinguished Sponsor?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is accepted by the DENR.

REP. BRAVO (A.). With that assurance, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I do not have any other question.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Thank you, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I rest my case.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from ANAKPAWIS Party-List, the Hon. Ariel "Ka Ayik" B. Casilao.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The honorable Congressman Casilao is recognized to make his interpellation.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, Mme. Sponsor and the family of the DENR.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Good afternoon.

REP. CASILAO. Will the Lady Sponsor yield to just three policy clarificatory questions.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. First, before the three policy questions, let me congratulate the good Secretary with the recent release of the mining audit wherein 20 of the mining companies were considered to have violated and must rectify their violations in order for them to continue their operation.

One, with regard to the National Greening Program, in our previous budget briefing and pre-plenary briefing, this Representation has requested for the status report or any intervention action of the DENR with regard to Isabela, Echague, CARAGA complaints of this Representation pertaining to reported eviction of farmers, especially those who are considered farmer-beneficiaries, of Department of Agrarian Reform CARP Program.

Now, just yesterday, my leader from Cagayan, who is among those from Amulung, Baggao, Alcala, Peñablanca, Iguig, with 7,000 hectares of rubber tree, complained of the cancellation of their CLOA as part of the DENR's assertion of the National Greening Program.

In our previous budget briefing, the good Secretary assured that there will be no farmers who will be evicted and that their current state, being farmer-beneficiaries of CARP, will be secured.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. That matter will be investigated by the DENR. But, the cancellation of CLOA is a DAR concern, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, I suppose it is my business with the Department of Agrarian Reform as to the cancellation, it is true. The report came in because of the request in accordance to the National Greening Program that the land will be for the exclusive use for the National Greening Program. So, the conflict between the interest of the CARP and the National

Greening Program could either be resolved by the two Executive departments while this Representation's concern remained on the farmer-beneficiaries.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, it will be investigated by the DENR, and that the policy that was already expressed by the good Secretary still holds, that no one shall be dislocated as a result of any of the programs of the DENR.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you very much, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Second is an update, because from the previous budget briefing and the pre-plenary, this Representation has not heard from the Department the request of this Representation with regard to the intervention and action of the DENR to the Patungan, Maragondon, Cavite investigation. We had a meeting with the Regional Director of Maragondon, Cavite and he mentioned about furnishing this Representation documents pertinent to this Representation's conduct of investigation in the nearest future. Those documents have not yet been provided as of the moment.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. We have provided the documents, but if still they are not in your possession, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, we can provide them again.

REP. CASILAO. Yes. For my last concern, the recent killing of a farmer-beneficiary in Yulo King Ranch covering Coron and Buswanga, Palawan was a result of an argument that later resulted in a violent confrontation. One of the concerned was the security guard from the agency, the BAI, the Bureau of Animal Industry security or the BAI security. Is there any activity or involvement or intervention from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or was there any intervention? Aside from being a police matter, since it is covered by the jurisdiction of the Department, was there any intervention that this Representation would like to be apprised of?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. The DENR has nothing to do with the killing, but it is committed to intervene by distributing lands to the beneficiary-farmers, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Just a manifestation, while I am commending the good Secretary of the recent report on the mining audit, again, I would like also to be apprised, and this Representation—be furnished of not only the metallic but also the non-metallic mining operations that are similarly hazardous to our environment that we also should look into.

Of course, the accompanying militarization when the good Secretary stated that accordingly, all military operations should not be used as private security guards of these mining companies. For that, I am also commending the good Secretary.

I have no more questions. That would be all, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is noted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative from the Party-List BUHAY, the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Representative from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Lito Atienza, is recognized to make his interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Floor Leader.

With the kind permission of the Lady Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, we would like to elaborate some issues about the environment today.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. If she is willing, we would like to ask her some relevant questions, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, I am willing.

REP. ATIENZA. Having said that, we would like to inform her that we are concentrating on the issue of water.

Alam po naman natin na ang tubig ay pinakamahalaga sa ating pangangailangan at sa ating kapaligiran. Anyone will survive without food, but water is more essential than anything else. Tama po ba ang aking pananaw, Mr. Speaker?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Tama po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Ang tubig ay buhay.

REP. ATIENZA. Tubig ay buhay. Tama po. Ako ay natutuwa sapagkat nasa tabi ninyo si Usec. Met Ignacio who is very well-versed on water. I am sure he will give the distinguished Sponsor the appropriate answers to what we are going to ask.

About eight years ago, the Supreme Court decided with finality that Manila Bay should really be cleared and cleaned, and that decision came about with the full support of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Iyon po ba ay naaalala pa ni Usec. Ignacio, Mr. Speaker?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Tama po iyon, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang utos po ng Korte Suprema with finality is a sustained, continuing order, a mandamus requiring all concerned local government units, all private corporations, and anyone who has access to the bay, provincial governments and everybody, especially the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, to immediately act on the deteriorating quality of the Manila Bay area.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. At this point in time, therefore, we would like to get an update. Ano na ba ang lagay ng Manila Bay with regard to the quality of water, and to the removal of the daily flowing of sewage water into the bay which is actually the killer of the bay? Mayroon bang nagawang patuloy na programa upang ang kautusan ng Korte Suprema ay masunod at mabigyan tayo ng quality water sa Manila Bay? Isa po sa napakaimportanteng mandate ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as mentioned earlier, is to promote a quality life for our people. Siguro naman tatanggapin natin kung ang Manila Bay ay malinaw at malinis na naman ang tubig na kulay bughaw, at ito ay nagagamit natin sa pang araw-araw na recreation, and even possible drinking purposes, but definitely, a means to promote development in the whole area surrounding this body of water. Mayroon po ba tayong improvement na maire-report sa lahat na naganap para sa kalagayan ng tubig sa Manila Bay?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the DENR admits that the water in Manila Bay is still polluted, kasi hindi pa po naayos ang sewerage system ng Metro Manila.

REP. ATIENZA. Did I hear that correctly, Mr. Speaker?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. The Gentleman heard that correctly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, is the Sponsor saying that the sewer lines have already been diverted?

REP. REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Hindi pa po nakukumpleto, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi pa po sapagkat nandoon ako palagi, araw-araw, sa lugar na iyon at ako ay umaasam-asam. Sabi ko nga, sana pansinin naman ang tungkulin at hindi mapabayaang ng DENR ngayon sapagkat ang tubig, sabi nga ng Isponsor, ay buhay. Malinis na Manila Bay, masayang pamayanan, maunlad na bansa—palagay ko, sunod-sunod na iyan basta sinunod natin ang tamang gawain, linisin ang tubig ng Manila Bay. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask one simple direct question to the Lady Sponsor. Is the DENR now allowing the proliferation and multiplication of fish pens and fish cages out in the bay which is one of the main causes of the deterioration of the waters? Kung kayo po ay tatayo sa seawall, makikita ninyo ang fish cages na aming tinanggal ay nagsibalik with vengeance. Malapit na po sa Maynila ang mga fish pen na nagmumula sa Cavite. Ito po ba ay pinapayagan na ngayon ng DENR, Mr. Speaker?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the DENR is not tolerating actually the construction of illegal structures, but they are trying to coordinate with the local government units with respect to the demolition of the structures.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, if the DENR just depends on the action to be taken by LGUs which are, in fact, the ones licensing the beginnings and the proliferation of fish pens, then I am afraid to say that we are doomed to fail.

The DENR, on its own, can get several backhoes, floating backhoes and remove all of these fish pens. That is the only way since we heard the mandate, the order, the direction of the President, no less, when he committed to the nation that he will clean the bodies of water of the country. Manila Bay is the centerpiece of all the water bodies that we have. Pag ito ay iniasa na lamang ng DENR sa local government units, hindi po ito magagalaw.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, since permits to build those structures were taken from LGUs, the DENR cannot arbitrarily remove all those structures without the concurrence of LGUs. But they can file cases against those who are responsible for water pollution.

REP. ATIENZA. Anyway, nakikinig sa atin si Sec. Gina Lopez. I do not think she will agree with the distinguished Sponsor. She will agree with this Representation that we need to remove these fish pens so that we will liberate the bay from continuing pollution being contributed by these structures. Whether legally

given permits by the local government units, the DENR has the mandate to promote general interest in removing these structures which hamper the free flow of water in that area.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. There is a commitment from the Secretary that they will remove the fish pens, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Yes, I believe that she will commit. She was in charge of the Pasig River cleanup. She cleaned up the Pasig River at one time. We worked together on that. I know that she will definitely take note of this exchange and dialogue in this interpellation of the budget. We will be relying on her commitment.

Shifting to another body of water, which is essential for the whole of Metro Manila, Southern Luzon and even portions of the northern or southern Central Luzon, we are talking about the Laguna de Bay. Ang Laguna de Bay po ay isa rin sa water bodies which could very well become one of the engines of national economic development. Visualize a Laguna de Bay with clean, clear water, this time, fresh water. Isipin po natin ang maidudulot na benepisyo niyan para sa ating lahat kung mayroon tayong gamit diyan, sa recreation, development and useful endeavors, in and around the area. Hindi tulad ngayon, nakaiiyak na makita. I urge all my colleagues, lalo na ang lumilipad sa probinsya every weekend, tingnan ninyo ang kalagayan ng Laguna de Bay, punung-puno ng fish pens. Talaga namang burdado na ng fish pens ang lawa. Kaya wala nang hanapbuhay ang mga mangingisda doon. Ang mga mangingisda ang pinakamahirap na sektor ngayon sa paligid-ligid ng Laguna de Bay.

Where before they had full control of the waters of Laguna de Bay, today, they are driven away by security guards of the fish pen companies. There are fish pens there which actually are scandalous in their sizes—five thousand hectares of fish pen area. Ito po ba ay nagbabayad; ito ba ay sinisingil; ito ba ay nagbibigay ng kalinisan sa ating tubig; o ito ay pinakikinabangan lang ng mga negosyante na karamihan sa kanila ay mayroon pang kapartner na mga banyaga—foreign-partnered enterprises to monopolize the Laguna de Bay waters for their benefit, but not for the Filipinos?

Pati po ang mga itik, hindi na mabuhay sa paligid ng Laguna de Bay. Wala nang balut doon, alam po ba ninyo ito? Wala nang nabubuhay na susô na kinakain ng mga itik na nangingitlog para maging balut. Why? Because the water is so polluted. One of the main reasons for this, again, is the continuing flow of effluent and poisonous sewage lines and waste water of companies surrounding the area, which is killing the bay little by little.

Ano po ba ang plano ng ating kagawaran ngayon dito sa lugar na ito, Mr. Speaker?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. The DENR wants to address this problem. By the end of the year, a lot of permits to operate fish pens would expire. They have realized that there is really a need to reduce the number of fish pens that would still be allowed in that lake. It has to meet the absorptive capacity of the lake. There is an admission that talagang sobrang-sobra...

REP. ATIENZA. You talk about the capacity, Mr. Speaker. Ano po ba ang capacity ng Laguna de Bay as far as fish pens are concerned?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. There are scientists who are now making studies to be able to know how many fish pens would still be allowed or if there is really a need to still grant permits to operate fish pens?

REP. ATIENZA. The law is very clear, Mr. Speaker. All our water bodies should be cleared of all of these impediments. I cannot accept any reasoning that would say “hindi namin magawa sapagkat ganito, ganiyan.” Aba, eh, kapag ganiyan ang reasoning natin, hindi na natin magagawa na mabawi ang ating water bodies from this abusive, destructive, and many times illegal use of public waters.

Wala akong nakikitang ganiyang klaseng gamit ng katubigan sa buong mundo. All of us who are travelled individuals, I challenge anyone if he or she can say “Hindi! Doon sa bansang iyon, binababoy din nila ang kanilang katubigan.” Dito lang sa Pilipinas nangyayari ito dahil dito, may malakas, may mahina, at ang mga mahihinang mangingisdang walang kalaban-laban.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung ano po iyong ibinubulong ni Undersecretary Ignacio, sabihin ninyo dahil magaling siya, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Ang sabi po ni Undersecretary Ignacio, most of the fish supply for Metro Manila comes from Laguna de Bay. They also realized that there really is a need to gradually remove all these fish pens. They would like to strengthen the small fishermen into producing all the fish supply that Metro Manila also needs.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, last July 25, President Duterte spoke before us in Congress. He promised the whole nation, “I will remove all the fish pens in Laguna de Bay.”

I almost stood up on my chair to clap for him because that was a good promise, a good commitment. It displays a residential concern on the conditions now prevailing in Laguna de Bay and Manila Bay.

From July up to now, ano po ba ang nangyari doon sa magandang tinuran at sinabi ng ating Pangulo?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Kaya nga po sabi nila, by the end of this year, a lot of the permits would expire. So, it is now under study whether we will remove all the fish pens or gradually remove the fish pens kasi nga we cannot also sacrifice the supply of fish for Metro Manila. Pero talagang palalakasin ho ang mga small fisherfolk so that they will have good harvest and that they would be able to provide the requirements of Metro Manila.

REP. ATIENZA. Replying to that, Mr. Speaker, I would say that they will not deliver anything by December because they are not doing anything today. Hindi po maaalis iyong mga fish pens kung hindi natin ginagawa iyan araw-araw, oras-oras, minu-minuto.

The campaign should have started the moment the President promised that in this Chamber, but up to now, we have not seen a continuing operation to clear Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay of these fish pens. So, you will not be able to deliver what you are stating, although it is recorded in this exchange that you are committing. Therefore, you are committing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, therefore you are committing the President, and I will get back at the end of the year to prove that the fish pens are still there.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

They have started the dismantling, but the massive dismantling would happen after the end of the year, after the expiration of the permits of the fish pen owners.

REP. ATIENZA. Nabasa ko rin po iyon—pinagmamalaking nag-alis na sila ng 50 square meters of fish pen. *(Laughter)*

Mr. Speaker, to give everyone an idea what we are talking about, the whole lake is about 99,000 hectares and is one of the biggest freshwater lakes in this part of Asia. Almost 70 percent of the lake is occupied by fish pens. Iyon po iyong mga aming pinag-uusapan. Pag ang aalisin po ninyo ay 50 square meters every other week, matatapos na po ang term ni Presidente Duterte, hindi po ninyo magagawa itong ating isinusumbong sa inyo at inyong ipinangangako.

We would suggest that you clear the waters even if you use the military, the Philippine Navy, and all the forces of the government at the fingertips of the President to order everyone. Clear these water bodies of these structures. Liberate the waters so that man, the Filipino, can make use of his water body, these public waters of the nation for himself and not for the exclusive use of businessmen.

Wala na pong nag-i-invest sa palaisdaan. Alam po ba ninyo iyon? Wala na po. Bakit? Aba e ang gagawin mo lamang, magtutuosok ka lamang ng kawayan sa katubigan ay mayroon ka ng palaisdaan. Noong araw, bumibili ng lupa, nilalagyan ng patubig, gagawa ng paraan para iyong free flow of water tumatakbo roon sa palaisdaan. Tubig dagat, tubig lawa, freshwater or whatever, iyan po ay ginugugulan, ginagastusan. E ngayon, hindi na po. Wala na pong nag-i-invest sa fish pen development. Why? Because they can use water bodies, public waters at that, for their fishponds. Iyan po ay isang malaking pagkukulang ng ating pamahalaan at ito po naman ay hindi ninyo inimbento ngayon at lalung-lalo naman, hindi ang kasalukuyang Sekretaryo ng Kagawaran. Ito po ay pinabayaan ng administrasyon after administration. Nakita ko po iyan noong ako ay kasama nilang naggigiba. Marami po akong buhok na pumuti sa kunsumisyon diyan sa problemang iyan. Kaya alam ko po ang problema at ito po ay tungkulin ko. Ilagay natin sa ating records na ito ay inuulit-ulit ko on the floor of Congress to state very clearly—we have a problem; we must attend to it.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to repeat their commitment that the reason they are going slow in their dismantling is because they would also want to avoid lawsuits if they violate the terms of the permit. But, you are assured, Mr. Speaker, that after December 31, of this year, they would be going massive in their dismantling of fish pens.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po naman, at iyan ay inaasahan namin. But, to put it on record, sino po ba ang namamahala ng Laguna de Bay? Dahil pinag-aaralan namin ang budget ng DENR ay wala pong budget ang Laguna de Bay Authority.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is Laguna Lake Development Authority. The reason they are not asking for an appropriation from Congress is that they are supposed to be self-liquidating. It is a government-controlled corporation.

REP. ATIENZA. So, they have their own budget coming from the Office of the President.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. They generate revenues from their own operations like rentals, permit fees and other fishing charges.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon po ang isang problemang dapat tingnan ng ating kagalang-galang na Sekretarya, iyang kababalaghan, the anomalous situation wherein the Laguna Lake Development Authority does not have

a budget. So, therefore, they are getting their financial needs from the collection of fees of those who violate the law in and around the lake. In other words, iyong pulis, umaasa na lang doon sa ibinabayad ng violator. Kaya, technically, to be able to generate enough funds, including bonuses, mas maganda po iyong maraming violation. Pag maraming violation, malaki ang kita. Pag talagang titingnan mo pa at hindi mo naman makikita ang violation, doble kita. Kaya iyan po ay kababalaghan ng sistema. Hindi puwede po siguro ganyan. I do not think you will agree with that system, distinguished Lady.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. But, the LLDA ...

REP. ATIENZA. You do not think so, you will agree or you do not think so that you will not agree?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. About them generating revenues? About them collecting fees from illegal fish pen owners? Not necessarily illegal fish pen owners, those who are building illegal structures, iyon ba?

Mr. Speaker, Laguna Lake Development Authority, as I earlier said, is a self-liquidating corporation. It is a government-controlled corporation which is generating its own revenues to fund its own operations, and that every year, they also remit a part of their earnings to the National Treasury. So, I am not in agreement and I think the DENR is not in agreement that they would be collecting from illegal fish pen operations and that that would encourage them really to allow just anybody to put up their illegal structures.

REP. ATIENZA. For the record, we would like to ask the Lady, to her knowledge, and you can ask Usec. Ignacio again. Ito po bang Laguna Lake Development Authority ay sa ilalim ng supervision ng DENR as an attached agency?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, it is one of the attached agencies.

REP. ATIENZA. Sabi ko sa inyo, magaling po iyang nasa tabi ninyo kaya hindi kayo magkakamali ng sagot.

So, being an attached agency, it is still the DENR which should really be supervising its operations. Huwag pabayaang iyong maling sistema ng paglikom ng salapi, iyong hindi pagtatrabaho, at pagbibigay ng lahat ng lisensya, at iyong hindi pagganap ng tungkulin to protect the water rather than depreciate it. Ang trabaho po ng Laguna Lake Development Authority—ito po ay alam ko sapagkat sa simula't simula, iyan po ay binuo, tiningnan ko na po. Ang sabi ko sa sarili ko, as a young man, hindi makakatulong itong Authority na ito,

bagkus, ito ang magiging dahilan na ang pinagkikitaan ng national economy ay mawawala unti-unti dito po sa maling sistemang ito. The proof that my apprehensions were correct, we now see an almost dead Laguna Lake with the kind of system that we are following to maintain its waters.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, the DENR is the supervising body over the operations of the LLDA, but they also respect the autonomy of these government-controlled corporations, and they are only setting policy directions for the LLDA.

REP. ATIENZA. Mali po iyong ibinulong sa inyo ni Usec. Ignacio. Dapat po ang isinagot ay, "Hindi po namin papayagan na ang Laguna Lake Authority ang masunod. Kami po ang masusunod sapagkat attached agency iyan sa amin."

Anyway, I would like to ask at this point, who is heading the Laguna Lake Development Authority?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. There is a new General Manager appointed by President Duterte, Joey Medina.

REP. ATIENZA. Joey ...

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. He is a former Mayor of Taguig, Rizal.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ang pangalan?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Joey Medina. Medina.

REP. ATIENZA. Joey De Lima? (*Laughter*)

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Medina, Medina, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). Please repeat the question.

REP. ATIENZA. Gusto ko lamang pong mag-relax kayo kaya ko nasabi iyon.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Okay.

REP. ATIENZA. Pero alam ko namang hindi maa-appoint ang sino man sa mga kamag-anakan noong taong iyon sa gobyernong ito. So, we have a new manager, is that what you are saying?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. He is the new appointee of the President, he was a former ...

REP. ATIENZA. Has he taken over, distinguished Lady?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Wala pa po.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala pa.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Wala pang oath—wala pa ...

REP. ATIENZA. Di, ang nakaupo roon—sino po ang nagpapatakbo ng Laguna Lake ngayon?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is still the OIC, former Congressman Acosta.

REP. ATIENZA. Siya pa rin ang nagpapatakbo?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Siya po. But he has already tendered his resignation ...

REP. ATIENZA. Pinapayagan ni Secretary Gina Lopez iyon? E, walang mangyayari talaga sa Laguna Lake ngayon. So, I would suggest that you hurry up the transition to a new manager so that whatever this administration is committing to the nation will be fulfilled. And for as long as the old manager remains in office, every day that passes, baka magkaroon pa ng bargain sale ngayon doon. Ano ang tawag doon, a rummage of sale or damaged fish pen sale.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, the Secretary has committed to facilitate the immediate oath-taking of the new administrator.

REP. ATIENZA. As I have stated, we have full confidence in the leadership of the DENR. We know that she has a broad vision of the needs of the environment, and she will attend to the problem of water bodies that we have been discussing. I can continue on and on, on the need to clean up our water bodies because all of them practically are now affected by the problem we have just discussed.

You go to Lake Taal, a protected area, in fact, protected landscape. Tingnan po ninyo ang kalagayan ngayon, napupuno na ng fish pen itong sa southeastern portion at nagmu-multiply pa po, na pag hindi pinigil, ang Taal Lake mapupuno ng fish pens. Again, agrabiyado na naman tayong lahat diyan at ang nagtatawa lamang at nag-e-enjoy sa negosyo nila, iyong mga nagtatayo ng fish pen.

Ganoon din po sa Lake Lanao. Ganoon din po sa Lake Buhi. Iyong magaganda nating mga katubigan, punung-puno na po ng abuso. Pumunta po kayo sa Central Luzon, Pampanga River, Bulacan River, and all the outlets into the sea are all full of fish pens. This is one

of the most abusive bad habits that has been allowed to proliferate. They are taking advantage of government's lack of interest on water.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. But I would like, I would like to ...

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. The good Secretary welcomes your involvement and participation with respect to that particular concern.

REP. ATIENZA. I am sure and I am positive because I am confident of her ability to lead this Department very effectively. Pero, hindi po naman siya ang may kasalanan dito sa mga sinasabi ko sa inyo. Kaya alam kong hindi naman niya ipagpapatuloy lahat itong mga pagkukulang na ito.

So, we need to cooperate with each other, Mr. Speaker. We need to legislate. We need to support the efforts of the DENR because all of us are affected by this growing destruction of our water bodies, and I hope the DENR will pursue the cases that were filed against those who have not complied with R.A. No. 9003.

I hope the DENR will also pursue our demand for water concessionaires to fulfill their concession agreements that they will provide waste water treatment plants in their areas of concession. Dahil hanggat hindi po nabubuo iyan, sa mabagal na paraan, iyan po ay almost 15, 17 years ago na iyang concession na iyan. In fact, mare-renew na siguro ngayon iyan, ay hindi pa po tayo nabibigyan ng efficient waste water treatment facilities, which are basic in their concession agreements. Can we rely on that, distinguished Lady, so that next year when we stand in the same Congress and in the same forum, we will be able to celebrate a success story of the new leadership of the Department of Environment?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. It is also hoped that the DENR would take note of all of those concerns. According to them, they are starting actually to enforce all laws relating to violations of solid waste management and they would be closely working with the DILG with respect to the enforcement of all these laws, so, that erring LGUs would be sanctioned, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, this morning, we talked about climate change. We discussed the budget of Climate Change Commission and it was, of course—one of the items taken up is how to clean our areas' surroundings of pollution including those of the water bodies, kaya hindi lamang po negosyo, kung hindi kalusugan, kapakanan at kaligtasan ng ating bansa

sa mapanirang bunga ng global warming and climate changing.

So, we rely on the good intentions of the honorable Lady and we are confident the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will deliver the commitments that you have just put on record. Iyon po naman ang isa sa mga purposes namin, kaya tinatalakay natin itong mga ito para maitala natin sa records ang ating mga concerns, common concerns and common commitments. Dahil kung pag-uusapan po ang pondo ay kulang po iyong pondo ng DENR. Dapat sana mga P15 billion ang ibibigay sa kanila, so rather than ask about the pesos and centavos, I engaged the Lady on general terms, so that we can help the DENR perform in this coming year its mandate to have a clean, clear environment, healthy for everyone and a good life for the Filipinos.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

Thank you, distinguished Lady for engaging us in this intercourse.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Thank you also, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Rep. Danilo E. Suarez of the Third District of Quezon, our Minority Leader, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Minority Leader is recognized to conduct his interpellation. You are so recognized, Congressman Suarez.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Dep. Majority Leader.

Will the Lady yield to some minor questions?

I will just delve on major issues, Mr. Speaker, although some will be parochial.

One time, I took a chopper ride from Manila to Balesin, and you will have to pass through General Nakar. That is our watershed and the water of the National Capital Region comes from this vast mountain range, Sierra Madre.

I am somewhat alarmed and disappointed, para pong napakaraming—alam po ba ninyo iyong pari, hindi po ba may puyo? Ang tawag po natin, na bilog sa kuwan, ganon po, green na green, puyo. Marami pong area na tinanong ko kay Mayor Rasul, sabi ko, “Bakit ang daming clearing in some areas?” At ang sagot po sa akin ay hindi po nila masawata ang mag-uuling.

Gusto ko lang malaman, ito po bang DENR ang nag-i-issue ng permit sa mag-uuling?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Mr. Speaker, Sierra Madre is a priority area for ...

REP. SUAREZ. No, no, distinguished Lady, I am asking a question. Iyon pong nag-uuling ay may permit po iyan. Kaya sino po ang nagbibigay ng permit sa mag-uuling?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. It is CENRO that issues the permit, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong PENRO?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. CENRO.

REP. SUAREZ. Provincial ...

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Community Environment and...

REP. SUAREZ. Iyan po ba ay under ng DENR?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, akin lang hong ipinapakiusap sa aking kaibigan na Kalihim, si Secretary Gina, medyo naaabuso po ito sapagkat iyon po namang nag-uuling na nagpuputol na sinasabing ang puputulin lang namin ay mga softwood, wala po namang sinasanto iyan. At ngayon, nakakaalarma na nga dahil watershed na ho ang pinapasok ng mag-uuling. Kaya ang isa hong masasabi natin at magiging makatuwiran na hakbang, baka naman—kami po, ang lalawigan po ng Quezon ay nagkaroon muna ng moratorium sa pagpuputol ng niyog, kaya baka naman po puwedeng magkaroon muna tayo ng kaunting pahinga sa mag-uuling. Baka puwede tayong magkaroon ng moratorium sa mga nag-uuling.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Mr. Speaker, they are actually introducing a new program using biochar as an alternative to fuel.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, if the formal solution of the Department is that, bigyan ho natin sila ng trabaho doon sa inyong greening program, sila ho ang magtanim, then you go to economics on where will they make more money, sa pag-uuling o pag-adopt po doon sa programa ninyo na sinasabing greening program? And I will just tell you right now, mas malaki po ang kikitain sa pag-uuling. So, I will just reiterate may appeal: pag-aralang mabuti at baka naman puwedeng magbigay tayo ng moratorium dito po sa napakalaking pinsalang nagagawa nitong mga nag-uuling.

Palagay ko po, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ito ho ay concern hindi lamang sa Quezon. Palagay ko

po, sa ibang mga Congressman, sa kung saan-saang lugar, talaga hong nagiging problema na ito.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. They are going to aggressively implement a program, an alternative program. It is a program that would be an alternative to the traditional source of fuel, which is charcoal, uling. Especially for those who are into burning of trees, they are also going to use part of their NGP budget for agro-forestry, that is, intercropping short-term crops or cash crops with forest trees, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Kasi, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, double whammy po tayo diyan. Bago po ninyo ulingin, ito po ay sinusunog. Tama po ang proseso, hindi ba? Inaapuyan iyan at sa init pamamagitan nito, iyon pong softwood or hardwood, ito po ay magiging charcoal. That process alone is an environmental crisis already...

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. ...sapagkat kapag nagsunog ka ng kahoy ay nag-e-emit ka po ng isang gas na nakakapinsala sa environment.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Pakitanong lang po ninyo sa principal, tama po ba ako?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Ngayon, kapag iyong uling ay ginatong mo at iyan ay sinunog mo, mag-e-emit ulit iyan ng makapaminsalang gas sa environment. Hindi po ba?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, let us weigh the equation. Ano po ba ang sinasabi ng ating substitute? Kaysa sa mag-uuling, ano po ba ang sasabihin? Iyan lang po naman ang kaya ng mahihirap. Mahal na rin po naman ang uling kung ikukumpara mo sa LPG, at anong uri pa ng pagluluto. Kaya, this concern, distinguished Sponsor, is a major issue that I hope the new leadership of the DENR will come up with a plausible and acceptable solution.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is why they are going to aggressively introduce this program using biochar, because as experienced, biochar would give an income of about—yes, they really have to introduce this biochar as well as other alternative

livelihood sources so that they would not be cutting trees, burning trees to make charcoal. They really are going to aggressively implement a program of providing alternative livelihood for those charcoal-makers.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Last year, parochial again ano, nagtanim po ang aming lalawigan ng dalawang milyong mangroves in one day, I do not know if you have heard of that, kasi ang lalawigan po ng Quezon ay bounded by two oceans, Pacific and South China Sea. Kami po ay nag-embark ng isang ambitious program na sa isang araw, sapagkat hindi pare-pareho naman ang tide at puwede ka magtanim, ay nag-ready po kami ng—ano ang tawag nila doon sa tinatanim na parang Monggol na lapis, what do you call that?—propagules, I think that is it, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Propagules, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyan po ay itinanim sa isang araw. Ngayon, mayroon kaming mas ambisyoso pang program: magtanim po kami ng tatlong milyong mangroves sa coastline. Alam po ninyo, ang isa sa mga lalawigan na may pinakamahabang coastline sa ating bansa ay ang aming lalawigan. Kaya puwede ko po bang hingin ang commitment na ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources ay tutulong po sa lalawigan dito sa ating imumungkahing pagtanim ng tatlong milyong mangroves?

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, part of the funds or part of the budget under the NGP will be utilized for planting mangroves nationwide.

REP. SUAREZ. Doon medyo susundan ko lang iyong sinabi ni Congressman Atienza. Alam po ninyo, ang tributary contribution ng ating potable water ay dalawa po. Una po, Umiray River, which contributes about 2.8 billion, that is the tributary flow ng tubig. Kung atin pong susukatin iyong per cubic inch ng lumalabas na tubig papunta hong Pacific Ocean, o sinasabi nating tinatapon natin na potable water papuntang dagat, ang Umiray po ay mahigit na dalawang bilyong litro isang araw. At ang Agos, pangalawa, na mas malaki ay 2.3 billion liters, sapagkat ang bundok po ay dalawa, isa pong papuntang Pacific Ocean at isa pong papuntang Laguna Lake, ang lalawigan po ng Quezon ay nagbibigay din ng tubig sa Laguna Lake. This is clean water but kapag na-mix po ninyo iyan sa polluted water ng Laguna Lake, nawawala po iyong value ng fresh water sapagkat napaka-contaminated na ng Laguna Lake.

Kaya tinanong ko, at gusto ko ring masabi ninyo kagaya ng sinabi noon na parang hindi na ho humihingi

ng budget ang Laguna Lake Authority sapagkat ito naman ay kumikita na, but tinatawagan din namin ng pansin na ang lake na ito is heavily silted na. Napakababaw na po because of massive siltation. Ang silt po ay nanggagaling sa bundok kapag umulan, bumababa po ang lupa at pumupunta sa lake. Mabuti noong time po ni Secretary Lopez napalalim po niya ang Pasig River, mabili-bilis na po ang paglabas ng mga tubig, both potable and contaminated water, from the Laguna Bay going to the South China Sea. We have done that.

Kaya ang point ko lang, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, baka naman po sa time ng ating bagong Kalihim, sususugan ko lang iyong concern natin na bigyan natin ng ibayong pansin ang pag-aalaga nito at pagpapalalimin muli ng Laguna Lake para ito po ay makapag-contain ng mas maraming tubig. Sapagkat kapag ho silted at umulan, babahain po talagang tayong lahat. It has to be deepened. I am talking about a certain case that is now in arbitration na palalalimin po sana iyang Laguna Lake, nagkaroon po ng utos ang Pangulong Aquino na iyan ay inihinto. Tayo po ay idinemanda ng isang foreign company just for that.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I think some of my concerns had been properly aired, and we just would like to get the assurance from the leadership of the Department on the concern of the Minority, primarily, ito pong watershed ng Sierra Madre na pinanggagalingan ng tubig ng National Capital Region.

REP. NUÑEZ-MALANYAON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is a commitment here, knowing that the Secretary is a hardcore environmentalist, and actually, she has a good track record, especially with respect to the Pasig River. So, I think she would do the same and make a difference with the Laguna Lake.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member from the Minority who wishes to ask questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the DENR and its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and its attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a joint motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the DENR. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO.3408

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 3408.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a motion to suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 3408.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 28, dated September 28, 2016.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; Journal No. 28, dated September 28, 2016, is hereby approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until Monday, October 3, 2016, at ten o'clock in the morning.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Quimbo). There is a motion to adjourn the session until Monday, October 3, 2016.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned.

It was 6:15 p.m.