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**JOURNAL NO. 37
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CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez called the session to order.

PRAYER AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Members observed a minute of silent prayer and thereafter sang the National Anthem.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

Deputy Speaker Hernandez informed the Body that Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano has put up an exhibit at the rear entrance of the House of Representatives as a fitting tribute to National Basketball Association (NBA) legend Kobe Bean Bryant. He enjoined his colleagues to observe a 24-second silent prayer for the families of the victims of the tragedy, and in memory of Kobe and his daughter, Gianna Maria Onore Bryant.

**DEFERMENT OF ROLL CALL
AND APPROVAL OF JOURNALS**

Thereafter, on motion of Rep. Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, there being no objection, the Body deferred the calling of the Roll and the approval of the Journals of the previous sessions.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

On motion of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body proceeded to the Reference of Business.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read on First Reading the titles of the following Bills, and Resolutions, including the Communications and Committee Reports, which were referred to the appropriate committees indicated hereunder:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6037, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A TEN
PERCENT BUDGETARY ALLOCATION
OF BARANGAYS FOR THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS,
PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES, AND SERVICES
FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE THE PERTINENT
PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'LOCAL
GOVERNMENT CODE' AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Quimbo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6038, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING MANDATORY SOCIAL
PENSION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS,
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED
BY REPUBLIC ACT NOS. 9257 AND
9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
'EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF
2010' ”

By Representative Quimbo
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 6039, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING BANKING
INSTITUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN
THE FINANCING SYSTEM FOR
AGRICULTURAL, FISHERIES AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE
PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Salceda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL
INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 6040, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MECHANISM
TO ENABLE POOR FILIPINO FAMILIES
TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE COLLEGE
GRADUATE BY INSTITUTIONALIZING
THE EXPANDED STUDENT GRANTS-
IN-AID PROGRAM FOR POVERTY
ALLEVIATION (ESGP-PA) AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6041, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING A COMPREHENSIVE RENAL REPLACEMENT THERAPY (RRT) FOR PATIENTS WITH END STAGE RENAL DISEASE IN NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS, INCREASING THE PHILHEALTH PACKAGE RATE FOR RENAL REPLACEMENT THERAPY OF MEMBERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6042, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCREENINGS FOR GLAUCOMA TO INDIVIDUALS DETERMINED TO BE AT HIGH RISK FOR GLAUCOMA”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6043, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

House Bill No. 6044, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE FORMER PRISONER’S EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6045, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SECURITY OF TENURE FOR ALL JOB ORDER AND CONTRACT OF SERVICE WORKERS OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE RENDERED THE PRESCRIBED YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6046, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROMOTE AGRI-TOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6047, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE YOUNG FARMERS PROGRAM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6048, entitled:

“AN ACT PRESERVING THE INDIGENOUS GAMES OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 6049, entitled:

“AN ACT INCORPORATING THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBLE, FAIR USAGE AND ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CURRICULA NATIONWIDE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6050, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FINANCIAL RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF CALAMITIES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated December 18, 2019 of Atty. Rufino M. Margate, Jr., Secretary General, Federation of Philippine Industries, Inc., furnishing the House of Representatives a copy of the FPI Annual Report for 2018-2019.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Letter dated January 9, 2020 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Audit Groups CGS I and II-Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. VI, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives with copies of the following reports on the Mambusao Water District, Mambusao, Capiz:

1. Management Letter for CYs 2008-2012 and 2015-2018; and
 2. Annual Audit Report for CYs 2013 and 2014.
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Email dated January 14, 2020 of Arsenia M. Sacdalan from the National Electrification Administration,

submitting their Fund Utilization Report as of December 31, 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letters dated 20 January 2020 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-002 dated 8 January 2020;
2. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-003 dated 8 January 2020;
3. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-004 dated 8 January 2020;
4. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-005 dated 8 January 2020; and
5. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-006 dated 10 January 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended October to December 2019 (Fourth Quarter) of the Province of Zamboanga del Sur on the Local Government Support Fund – KALSADA Projects 2016, CMGP 2017, and CMGP 2019, attested by Hon. Victor J. Yu, Provincial Governor.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 205), re H.B. No. 6087, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MINDANAO (USM), LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KABACAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO, TO BE KNOWN AS THE USM-KABACAN, COTABATO TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3118

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Ungab and Tejada

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 206), re H.B. No. 6088, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE CITY OF CALBAYOG, PROVINCE OF SAMAR, TO BE KNOWN AS THE CALBAYOG CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3232

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Ungab and Sarmiento

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on People’s Participation (Committee Report No. 207), re H.B. No. 6091, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY TO VOLUNTEERS FOR ACTS OR OMISSIONS COMMITTED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES DURING EMERGENCY SITUATION”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 1643, 2003, 2036, 2856, 3474, 3852, 4967 and 5200

Sponsors: Representatives Robes, Sy-Alvarado, Nieto, Herrera-Dy and Bañas-Nogralas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms (Committee Report No. 208), re H.B. No. 6095, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF AUTHORIZED ELECTION CAMPAIGN EXPENSES OF CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7166, ENTITLED, ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS AND FOR ELECTORAL REFORMS, AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 1318, 1479, 3731, 3838, 4091, 4191 and 5187

Sponsors: Representatives Ferrer (Juliet), Oaminal and Pimentel

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Thereafter, the session was suspended at 3:10 p.m. upon motion of Representative Palma.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:22 p.m., the session resumed.

**BUSINESS FOR THURSDAY AND FRIDAY:
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 181
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 5888**

On successive motions of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body considered on Second Reading House Bill No. 5888 calendared under the Business for Thursday and Friday, contained in Committee Report No. 181 as reported out by the Committees on Public Works and Highways, and Appropriations, establishing the Third District Engineering Office in M'lang, Cotabato, and appropriating funds therefor; dispensed with the reading of the text of the measure without prejudice to its insertion into the records of the House, as copies thereof had been previously distributed to the Members; adopted the Explanatory Note of the Bill as the sponsorship remarks on the measure, on motion of Rep. Eleanandro Jesus F. Madrona, chairman of the Committee on Public Works and Highways; terminated the period of sponsorship and debate in the absence of interpellations; terminated the period of amendments in the absence of committee and individual amendments; and approved the measure on Second Reading through *viva voce* voting.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 3:24 p.m., the Chair declared a recess upon Representative Palma's motion.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

The session resumed at 3:28 p.m.

THE QUESTION HOUR

Thereupon, on motion of Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, there being no objection, the Body proceeded to the Question Hour. This was in accordance with Section 22, Article VI of the Constitution and Section 124, Rule XVII of the Provisional Rules of the House; and pursuant to the motion duly approved by the House on January

28, 2020, requesting Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Francisco T. Duque III to appear before the Chamber under the Question Hour and answer questions from the Members on the threat of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) in the country and on the precautionary measures being undertaken by the DOH thereon.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 3:29 p.m., on motion of Majority Leader Romualdez (F.M.), the Chair suspended the session to allow Secretary Duque and his technical staff to take their designated seats in the Session Hall.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

The session resumed at 3:29 p.m.

On motion of Majority Leader Romualdez (F.M.), there being no objection, the Chair then recognized Secretary Duque for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT
OF SECRETARY DUQUE**

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, and the Majority Floor Leader. I would like to thank you on behalf of the Department of Health for this opportunity to present to you the latest information and updates vis-à-vis the novel coronavirus which is technically termed as the 2019-nCoV. My presentation will follow the outline as presented: first, Introduction to Coronaviruses, and in particular, the novel coronavirus—2019 nCoV; the 2019-nCoV Global Situation, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker; 2019-nCoV Philippine Situation; following, thereafter, the Virulence of the 2019-nCoV Infection and last but not the least, the actions taken by your Department of Health and the Advice to the Public.

Coronaviruses, Your Honors, refer to a large family of viruses belonging to the family *coronaviridae*, and they were named after the crown-like spikes under surface—as you can see on the slide, *iyon pong nakikita natin doon na may mga spikes sa taas* thus earning for itself the name “coronavirus.” These are zoonotic viruses, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people.

These viruses caused illness ranging from the common cold, which some of us here must have experienced once or more times in our lives. And this can lead as well to more severe diseases like the MERS-CoV or the Middle Eastern Respiratory

Syndrome and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or the SARS-CoV.

Your Honors, the patients who contract the more serious coronavirus were shown to exhibit respiratory symptoms, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties, and in extreme cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory infection, kidney failure, and to the extreme, even death.

On December 31, 2019, the WHO was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. In January 7 of this year, Chinese authorities confirmed that they, indeed, have identified a new type of coronavirus. The novel coronavirus is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

As of January 27, 2020, the World Health Organization has confirmed human-to-human transmission largely in Wuhan City and some other places in China. However, there is not enough information yet to draw a definitive conclusion about the intensity of the human-to-human transmission, full clinical features and the original source of the outbreak.

And while the development of a vaccine for the nCoV is currently underway, it may take several months to years before it can be made available to the public for use. And for those ill, no definitive treatment can be given; supportive care and symptomatic treatment are still advised as with any viral infection.

Next. As of 28 January, the total count cases is 4,593 with China 4,537 reporting the highest number of cases. And there are confirmed cases in Thailand—there you have it on the right side of your screen—Singapore, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, France, Germany, Korea, USA, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Canada. There are about 54 total number of cases outside of the whole of China.

There are 106 deaths recorded out of the 5,000 or rather 4,593 cases. Hence, a case fatality of 2.3 percent all recorded deaths are so far from China. Next. In terms of risk level, China has been classified as very high-risk. The Western Pacific Region is considered high-risk, while global risk has been classified as high from moderate just two days ago. So, this gives us an idea of how quickly this virus seems to be mutating and the transmission rate increasing by the day.

Your Honors, there are 55 novel coronavirus-related health events that were reported to the Epidemiology Bureau of the DOH. A total of 27 of the 50 are categorized as Patient Under Investigation or (PUI). All have history of travel to Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

Of the reported PUIs, four have been cleared and discharged, while the five-year old suspected cases tested negative thankfully after the Australia—Melbourne, Australia International Reference Laboratory released its test which yielded, again, negative.

So far, there are zero confirmed cases of nCoV in our country.

This map shows the distribution of PUIs reported in the Philippines. So, you can see the breakdown as flashed on the screen.

And to put into perspective the nCoV against other pathogenic coronaviruses that cause severe illness, I would like to refer you to the comparison table between the SARS-CoV, the MERS-CoV, and the nCoV.

Until recently, human coronaviruses received relatively little attention due to their mild forms in humans. This however changed in 2002 when cases of severe atypical pneumonia were described in Guangdong, China causing worldwide concern as diseases spread via international travel to more than two dozen countries. The new disease became known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS and a beta-HCoV named SARS-CoV was identified as the causative agent.

Ultimately, Your Honors, classic public health measures brought the SARS pandemic to an end, but not before 8,098 individuals, there as you can see, were infected, and 774 died with a case fatality rate of 10 percent, the second highest next to the MERS-CoV which posted a 36 percent case fatality ratio.

So, which brings me, in 2012, another highly pathogenic CoV plagued the world when the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome was recognized and MERS-CoV was identified in the sputum of a Middle-Eastern man who died from respiratory failure. But unlike SARS-CoV which rapidly spread across the globe and was contained and eliminated in relatively short order, MERS has smoldered, characterized by sporadic zoonotic transmission and limited chains of human spread.

Your Honors, according to the World Health Organization, as of November 2019, MERS-CoV has caused a total of 2,494 cases and 858 deaths, the majority in Saudi Arabia. The natural reservoir of MERS-CoV is presumed to be bats, yet human transmission events have primarily been attributed to an intermediate host, the dromedary camel.

While MERS has not caused the international panic seen with SARS, the emergence of this second highly pathogenic zoonotic HCoV illustrates the threat posed by this viral family. In 2017, the WHO placed SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV on its Priority Pathogen list, hoping to galvanize research and the development of countermeasures against CoVs.

With the emergence of the 2019-nCoV, Your Honors, we currently see similarities with SARS-CoV, such as its symptomatology and epidemiology. However, in terms of virulence, at this early stage of the disease outbreak, we see a comparatively lower case fatality rate at 2.3 percent, again, there on your screen for your better appreciation, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker. We are vigilantly watching out for further developments on the knowledge regarding this novel coronavirus, and we expect iterative changes as the days pass by.

Corollary, in the following table, we see the comparative virulence of the seasonal influenza virus (or the common flu) against the 2019-nCoV.

And gleaning from the reports of the WHO and the CDC, we see that the global case fatality rate of nCoV against the seasonal flu at around the same time, period rather, December 2019 to January 2020 is comparatively lower than that of the latter, figuring at 2.3 percent versus 4.7, aggregated from all serotypes.

Iyon lang po, madali po ang sinasabi dito. Kung ihahambing po natin sa seasonal flu, same time, period, about from December 2019 to January 2020 and compared to this emerging novel coronavirus, you still see a relatively lower case fatality ratio.

And while this data show us the facts, Your Honors, we at the DOH are not letting our guards down. In response to the threat of the 2019-nCoV, the DOH has:

One, established a dedicated task force on 2019-nCoV.

We issued interim guidelines on the same.

We heightened the border screening or surveillance through thermal scanning and use of the Health Declaration Card or Checklist. Ito po iyong yellow forms na ibinibigay sa atin pong mga pumapasok na mga pasahero.

We are mandated the use of decision table in evaluating sick passengers.

Directed triaging at the arrival area on sick passengers.

Ensured laboratory and hospital preparedness.

We have established the 2019-nCoV surveillance for daily update. Ngayon po, araw-araw na po, nagbibigay kami ng mga pinakahuling evidence-based and science-based reports for the media and for the general public.

And of course, but not the least, we have intensified risk communication in all communications or media platforms including, of course, the social media.

Moreover, Personal Protective Equipment are available at the Bureau of Quarantine, Centers for Health Development, and the DOH hospitals. Your DOH is also closely monitoring individuals who manifested signs of respiratory infection and had a history of travel to China and coordinating with WHO in China Center for Disease Control for updates.

The DOH reiterates that the public must practice frequent handwashing, avoid unprotected contact with farm or wild animals, practice proper cough etiquette, maintain, at least, one-meter distance and cover the mouth and sneezes with the tissue or the crook of the elbow, avoid close contact with people showing cold or flu-like symptoms, and ensure that the food that is eaten is well-cooked. Hindi puwedeng mahilaw-hilaw lalo na mayroon rin po tayong African swine flu.

Travelers with symptoms of respiratory illness, either during or after travel, are urged to seek medical attention immediately. All health facilities are to enhance standard infection prevention and control practices, especially in our emergency/triage departments.

Lastly, again I emphasize, we must always be ready. Better ready than sorry.

Again, in behalf of the DOH, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, and to the distinguished

Members of the House of Representatives, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

We are ready to answer the questions from the floor. Thank you.

MOTION OF REPRESENTATIVE REMULLA

On motion of Senior Deputy Majority Leader Jesus Crispin C. Remulla, there being no objection, the time allotted for each Member's questioning was limited to five minutes each.

To present her questions, Representative Remulla recognized Rep. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, MD, chairperson of the Committee on Health.

QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE TAN (A.) AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE

REP. TAN (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues and the honorable Secretary. Just to summarize the points I made during my privilege speech yesterday, allow me to ask the following clarificatory questions to the Secretary.

The first question is, as I understand yet, the novel coronavirus is genetically distinct from the common human coronaviruses, which caused seasonal acute respiratory illness. It is also genetically distinct from the two newer human coronaviruses, MERS-CoV and the SARS-CoV. May I know if we have the capability to do the definitive testing for 2019 novel coronavirus because, as I understand it, current testing is being sent to Australia. And if so, do we have resources to procure whatever is necessary and how soon can we start testing on our own?

SEC. DUQUE. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chairman of the Committee on Health. The Japanese counterpart of the RITM today has just brought with them, the team, a primer—RNA primer which is needed to help us identify whether the novel coronavirus suspect cases, once there's a throat swab, their nasal pharyngeal swabs, are submitted to RITM for testing with the RNA primer... yes, in about 48 hours they shall be able to set up our own capability to detect a novel coronavirus and no longer need to send for confirmatory testing to Melbourne, Australia.

So, yes, the answer to that is yes.

REP. TAN (A.). So, are we planning to have that equipment or whatever agents that they are using to

test for coronavirus to have it placed here in RITM or any other facilities in...

SEC. DUQUE. For the first...

REP. TAN (A.). government hospitals.

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Ma'am. For the first round of testing, we are adequately supplied. But we will have to find out the volume of the supplies that have been brought by the Japanese contingent to help us precisely to do the testing ourselves and confirm it ourselves. And this, will cut the turnaround time by 50 percent.

REP. TAN (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honorable Secretary. There were news that came out, I think, an hour ago in different media outlets on the death of a patient under investigation in San Lazaro. Can you update us because some of the reports are deceiving, saying that this is the first death in the Philippines of this Chinese national?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Mr. Speaker. The case that has been reported, though in accuracy, by I think, I believe it was CNN—this patient although satisfied the criteria for a person under investigation, as I have presented on the screen, the latest result of the tests done by both RITM and the San Lazaro Hospital which has a Reference Laboratory capability is from RITM, it was positive for stuff or used and while the San Lazaro Reference Laboratory yielded a positive for HIV-AIDS virus for two testings that were conducted.

But, having said that, we are still awaiting for the test that will be run by the RITM given now that we have new RNA Primer and the new reagents, so that we can say for sure and conclusively whether this could be a co-infection or there is absolutely no coronavirus as one of the possible causes.

REP. TAN (A.). So, just to allay the fears of our countrymen, you're confirming that this is not a coronavirus-related death.

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, I underscore that there is nothing in the preliminary test results that would show that this death is caused by novel coronavirus.

REP. TAN (A.). Thank you so much for that, Secretary. My next question, just in case that the nCoV enters the country considering the speed by

which it spreads across the different population, do we have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the influx of patients, just in case?

Another question is, is mandatory reporting for these cases in place?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes. The answer to the first question, Ma'am, is, the capacities of all of the DOH-retained hospitals and medical centers have been levelled up. That was the initial instruction or directive of the DOH Execom to all of our regional directors. Same directive was cascaded to all of our medical center chiefs to, in fact, specifically, set aside a number of isolation rooms. Okay, so that is now very much in place.

And insofar as the infrastructure is concerned, from the level of border surveillance, which is the mandate of the Bureau of Quarantine, this has been very much put in place; also, this has been heightened in fact, to include the reinstatement of the Health Declaration Card or the yellow form; and also the issuance of the interim guidelines, which will change from day-to-day as we are updated by the WHO. We are nimble to the information stream that goes to the DOH and we make the necessary adjustments.

And, also, Madam Representative, we have also put in place the surveillance systems, community surveillance. This is not just the border surveillance but also the surveillance within the communities. Kasi, baka ho makalusot at mapunta sa mga komunidad e maigi na po iyong may kakayahan po tayo, at ang gumagawa po niyan ang ating Epidemiology Bureau.

Mayroon po tayong mga surveillance unit officers, na sila po ang nakatutok and they're in constant coordination with our frontline Bureau of Quarantine officers.

And then, our risk communication and community engagement, the public health advisories. I think you have come across some of them, and we are also leveling this up so that the public will be able to benefit from evidence-based, science-based information and to neutralize whatever infodemics or the epidemic of false or fake news that are being propagated by unwitting individuals who are perhaps not aware, sufficiently informed of the latest with regard to novel coronavirus, Madam Representative.

REP. TAN (A.). Mr. Speaker, last question, in the interest of time and to give way to our colleagues

here, I was informed that yesterday you have that high-level inter-agency meeting. One of the concerns is that on the restrictions on flight and repatriation of our OFWs in China. Can you share with us what transpired in that high-level meeting?

SEC. DUQUE. The high-level meeting, Mr. Speaker, Madam Representative, is on the authority of Executive Order No. 168, issued by then President Aquino in 2014, and this is the Emerging Infectious Disease Task Force which consists of representatives. In fact, Cabinet-level representatives from, of course, the DOH heading or chairing the task force; we have the DOJ, because the Bureau of Immigration is there; the DOTr; the Philippine Coast Guard, being the operating unit of the agency; then we have the Department of Tourism; we have the DOLE; we have the DOTC, DOTr, and the DILG.

We convened yesterday and arrived at a resolution to do the following:

Number one is to facilitate the voluntary return of Filipinos who are currently in Wuhan City, China—those who have manifested their desire to be repatriated to the Philippines, and we said that we will prepare. So, there will be charter flights. The Civil Aeronautics Board and the CAAP are preparing the charter flights, they are contracting charter flights precisely to bring in the 50 or so Filipinos who have manifested their desire to be repatriated, plus the conditionality that should they come back to the Philippines, they will be all collectively subjected to quarantine measures. Para lang po nakakasiguro tayo na hindi po sila makabalik at makapanghahawa naman doon po sa ating mga kapwa Pilipino.

At, of course, that is, of course, one of the contents of the resolution. Second, is, of course, the commitment that the DOH will provide continuous flow of evidence-based information and public health advisories because right now the dilemma there is the communications barrier. The language barrier is really making it very difficult for our people to understand the local health authority's advisories. So, we intend to complement this by giving them through telemedicine which is also being put in place. At, as we are talking, the telemedicine infrastructure is being prepared, Your Honor.

So, these are the two more important DOH-related contents of the resolution passed by the task force.

Thank you, Ma'am.

REP. TAN (A.). Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker and the honorable Secretary, for giving us time for our invitation to come here and update us on the issues or the status on the novel coronavirus. So, maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong pagdalo sa hapong ito.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SEC. DUQUE. Ganoon din po, maraming salamat po sa inyo at sa pagkakataong ibinibigay ninyo sa Department of Health upang makapagpaliwanag hinggil po sa namamayagpag na ating novel coronavirus. Maraming salamat po sa ngalan ng DOH.

The Chair thereafter recognized Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda for her questions.

**QUESTIONS OF
DEPUTY SPEAKER LEGARDA
AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE**

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few questions.

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you, Sir.

REP. LEGARDA. May the honorable Secretary Francisco Duque yield to a few questions, Mr. Secretary?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes.

REP. LEGARDA. Yes.

SEC. DUQUE. Mr. Speaker, yes.

REP. LEGARDA. The other day, I communicated with Secretary Teddy Locsin upon the impression or I thought that it would be the designation or the task of the Department of Foreign Affairs to decide on whether we should close our airports and seaports temporarily during the health crisis, to any Chinese mainland tourists. And, he texted me that he has shared or delegated the authority to the DOH, through Secretary Duque.

Your Honor, may I confirm if this is indeed accurate and second, if it is your task to do so, are you inclined at the soonest possible time to ban first the entry of any mainland Chinese tourists while the virus is still not contained in mainland China? Just that basic question, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Speaker.

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you very much, Madam Representative.

The situation remains fluid and certainly the task force of the DOH on the novel coronavirus meets every now and then and, in fact, very frequently to be guided by the recommendations from the WHO. They bridge the DOH to the health authorities in Wuhan City in particular, the Hubei province and the whole of China for that matter. And certainly, that is one of the possible options that we are looking at but not at this very moment.

REP. LEGARDA. Okay.

SEC. DUQUE. The reason being, Your Honor, is we have to be very careful also about the possible repercussions of doing this in the light of the fact that the confirmed cases of coronaviruses are not limited to China but now, in fact, in several countries, as I have shown on the slides. And, if we do this, then, the concerned country, and China, in this case, might question why we're not doing the same for all the other countries that have reported confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus. So, it is a very tricky, very difficult issue that you have raised, but certainly, we commit to take this into consideration as we move on in making the necessary adjustments or revisions in our guidelines, Your Honor.

REP. LEGARDA. Mr. Secretary, in my understanding, then, only flights from Wuhan to the Philippines has been banned. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Your Honor, I believe that this is an international airport in Wuhan. So, I think, there are many other provinces—the Chinese nationals would need to go to one of the major international airports. So now, at least for Wuhan, there has been a lockdown. The Chinese government has already restricted travel to and from Wuhan City, and I think, even Hubei at this point, but subject to validation.

REP. LEGARDA. Since we are a heavily populated country and we are clearly incapable of handling such a health crisis should it happen in the Philippines, would it not be prudent, Mr. Secretary, to be proactive, and ban temporarily any mainland Chinese tourists in any airports or ports, not just Wuhan, since the coronavirus has spread to other cities in China?

Again, let me not be misconstrued, I just value too much the health of the 108 million Filipino

people, heavily populated, dikit-dikit sa mga siyudad po, and we do not have the resources nor perhaps the medical know-how—we have to send some of our tests to Australia. So, would it not be prudent for us, take for example, Subic, when the residents protested against the entry of a cruise ship bearing the mainland Chinese residents who may or may not be afflicted with the coronavirus?

So, this is actually not my personal belief, but I had been asked as an elected Representative, not only of my province but of even other Representatives who may be shy to manifest this or other people and they're asking what are you in Congress doing? So, I asked Secretary Locsin and I can show you the text of Secretary Teddy, he said, "Loren, I agree with you, you may be right." So, I tried to call you the other night. I understand, you are very busy, we cannot communicate with each other, so I am putting it on record on the possibility of just temporarily closing to mainland because it has spread there. I am not saying that all others, where there are one or two victims that we should close our tourism to those areas, but should we not close it?

I recall that there is a Wuhan-Caticlan flight which was operating until last Wednesday, and you're very efficient, DOH personnel had to look for the Wuhan individuals who were already in Boracay vacationing and had to be retrieved from Boracay and returned back to Wuhan. Correct me if my information is inaccurate.

So, do we still need to do that, to allow some Chinese from Wuhan, who may have gone to Shanghai or Beijing, and infected some people there to come to the Philippines because we have not closed our doors and look for them in our provinces and then send them back? Would it not be more efficient that we simply just say "no" for the meantime until the situation has been contained in mainland China? Just a question, Mr. Secretary, I know it is very tricky. I realized there are political and diplomatic repercussions, but for me, the health of the Filipino people, especially those who may not have the resources to buy masks, to stay away from each other. If that is at stake, then we must do everything to protect our people, Secretary, Mr. Speaker.

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you, Madam Representative. First of all, I share your concern—for the health of the Filipino people. That is the mandate of the DOH. And in terms of preparedness

of the DOH to deal with this challenge, as I have said, we have scaled up, we have levelled up our border surveillance. Our quarantine officers are well-equipped to make sure that patients who will be classified as persons under investigation will be isolated. Consequently, they will be subjected to further evaluation...

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you.

SEC. DUQUE. ...and the specimens, the collection will be sent to the reference lab, the RITM, which is the primary laboratory that does the testing. The second level would be the Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit. The mechanism is also in place. So, we've levelled up across the different spectrum of health system that is to respond to the event even when the novel coronavirus enters the country. But let me reassure you, Your Honor that we will always bear in mind this very well meaning recommendation that you have so eloquently articulated, and certainly we will think of it—we will always consider this in the next task force meetings, Your Honor.

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Speaker. My last question, Mr. Speaker, is I have read in news reports that some of the blood tests have been sent to Australia—and I would imagine that our private hospitals or the DOH or is it the RITM that does the processing of the results of the blood tests? Do the Philippine authorities in health, under DOH, have the equipment, the personnel to assess immediately whether it is coronavirus? Or are the technology and equipment not available in the Philippines under DOH or RITM or any agency of DOH? And if so, what is needed so that in the National Expenditure Program (NEP) of 2021, which you are doing now, kindly put all the training for your personnel, all the equipment needed under DOH, under RITM if my—is that correct, RITM?

SEC. DUQUE. All right.

REP. LEGARDA. That's the one that's doing it, right? Is there any other agency that is equipped with that? And why are we sending the results to Australia to confirm or verify if it is coronavirus? Are we incapable of knowing the results here in our medical facilities, Mr. Speaker?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Representative, the testing capability wasn't available until today because Japan, as I have said

earlier, the contingent from Japan which is the RITM counterpart, has arrived this morning with the RNA Primer and the reagents needed to identify the novel coronavirus in persons under investigation. And by Friday, ours—as assured by the Executive Director of RITM that the set up will be ready and they will be testing the specimens once submitted to them. So, that way, the need for an international confirmatory testing will no longer be necessary.

REP. LEGARDA. Last question. When do we know whether the 27 is just flu or coronavirus, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Speaker?

SEC. DUQUE. Pardon me.

REP. LEGARDA. How do we confirm whether the 27 under investigation is actually...

SEC. DUQUE. Yes. The specimens, these are as throat swabs, oropharyngeal, nasopharyngeal swabs. Part of the protocol—testing protocol is automatically sending these specimens to the RITM and they do an initial testing. It's a little bit technical, my apologies. The RITM initially runs the FTD 33 test. This is a test for several viruses and bacteria, some other microbes. But unfortunately, that initial testing capability cannot identify specifically the novel coronavirus. It can identify the pancoronavirus which is non-specific. And that should trigger, therefore, a higher level testing which is going to be more definitive for the novel coronavirus. And like I have said, Mr. Speaker, this will now be available by Friday, Mr. Speaker. But we will, of course, certainly, submit to you—I have already been given an indicative budget that will support us in a more effective response to this emerging infectious disease.

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Secretary.

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you.

On motion of Rep. Ria Christina G. Fariñas, the Chair recognized Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr. to ask his questions.

QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE ATIENZA AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE

REP. ATIENZA. Maraming salamat po. Mr. Secretary, thank you for acceding to come here, and help us be informed more accurately so that

our people would also be informed at hindi sila matatakot na lamang na wala kaming kasagutan. My first question is, as you presented it, and as we know it, the symptoms of the coronavirus strain today are very similar to that of the ordinary flu. Is that right or wrong?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Is there any difference between the two that we can immediately identify if coronavirus iyan, pag-ingatan natin, either child who got sick with flu in the past week, siyempre kabadong-kabado lahat ng mga pamilya. Ako hindi ako natakot, sabi ko, “Flu iyan, flu, ‘di flu.” And your figure showed that. So, is there any discernible difference between the symptoms of ordinary flu and coronavirus?

SEC. DUQUE. Doon po sa mga katulad natin na maayos po ang ating kalusugan, iyon pong ating kakayahang labanan ito—kasi kahit na po iyong ordinaryong coronavirus, sa atin kaya natin ‘yan. After a few days mawawala, self-limiting. Pero sa may mga co-existing medical conditions—diabetes, hypertension, cancer—iyan po, kahit na iyong mga hindi mabigat na coronavirus ay makapagdudulot ng seryoso o grabeng kumplikasyon. Pero ito po sa ngayon, tama po kayo, lahat ng signs and symptoms are almost similar except iyong mayroon pong severe acute respiratory infection propensity, ito pong novel coronavirus, as evidenced by the cases that have been managed in the different hospitals in Wuhan City.

REP. ATIENZA. So, at this point, wala pong unmistakable and unquestionable symptom that we should look for in a suspected coronavirus.

SEC. DUQUE. Wala po.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala.

SEC. DUQUE. Wala po. Wala pong malinaw.

REP. ATIENZA. So, therefore, iyong flu at iyong coronavirus are almost equally the same.

SEC. DUQUE. Opo, based on what we have projected on the slide, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyan po’y importante para ang ating mga mamamayan ay hindi takot, hindi stressed. At hindi sila matatarantang bumili ng mask na ngayon ay out of stock na. Some people are making a lot of

money, incidentally, for this particular situation. And according to your figures, in a period from 2019 up to 2020, out of 44,000 cases of flu, 7,000 died. Tama po ba iyong naalala kong figure?

SEC. DUQUE. Tama po kayo. I am just double-checking.

REP. ATIENZA. At iyong figure natin sa coronavirus, kulang-kulang 5,000 ay 106 lang ang namatay, so far. Tama rin po iyon.

SEC. DUQUE. Tama po iyon.

REP. ATIENZA. Samakatuwid, ang laki ng threat—banta sa buhay ng trangkaso—yong kilala nating flu, influenza, or you may want to call it any other name. Seven percent out of 44,000 who got it, died in the process. But those suspected, or maybe, in some quarters, affirmed to be coronavirus victims ay 106 lang ang namatay. So, why are we so rattled about this issue? Why are we so heated? Why is the Philippines, for that matter, na wala tayo, not even one case is confirmed today. E, bakit tayo natataranta at bakit natin tinataranta ang ating mga tao? I would not blame the Department of Health... to quietly do your job, guard against the spread of the suspected virus. But seeing, hearing nothing else on television except this particular issue... Well, our poor are dying of ordinary trangkaso, tuberculosis, cancer. Iyang problema ng mga mahihirap, iyon ang ating pag-usapan, palagay ko, ngayon sa Kongreso. Kung ano ang kailangan para ang TB (tuberculosis) ay hindi na po kumitil ng buhay ng Pilipino. Coronavirus—mag-ingat na lang tayo. Dapat itinuturo talaga iyong proper sanitation, at hindi naman dahil sa mayroon lamang banta. Tama po ba iyong aking assumption? Kaya Mr. Secretary, please help us explain this to our people.

SEC. DUQUE. Opo. Tama po iyong inyo pong pagkakaintindi nitong sitwasyon na ito. Ang problema lang po kasi bago nga po ito, so, hanggang ngayon, even the WHO sees too many blind spots about this virus. And because this is novel, we do not know to what extent the mutation of this virus will reach. So better that we are prepared—we prepare for the worst and hope for the best, so to speak. So, iyon lang po iyon. Kaya po tinututukan natin ito. Katuwang po natin ang World Health Organization, na siya po ang nagmamatyag kung ano ba iyong mga developments patungkol sa virus na ito. Hindi lamang po sa loob ng China, kung hindi sa labas ng China, at sa marami na pong mga bansa. At sana po sa atin hindi makapasok. Katulad po ng MERS-CoV,

kung magkaroon man, kakaunti in 2014 and 2015. Ang SARS naman, nagkaroon din tayo in 2003 but it was an imported SARS. No community transmission.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po sa inyong sagot. Ako’y magmumungkahi lang, sapagkat kayo ay kilala kong personal. Maganda siguro, dagdagan ninyo ang inyong mga advisory. Ang Filipino ay malakas ang katawan. Hindi tayo tinamaan ng SARS. Hindi tayo tinamaan nang MERS-CoV. Maraming sakit na hindi dumadapo dito. Pero iyong sakit na nandito na ay iyon ang ating pag-ingatan. Puwede naman pag-ingatan iyong TB. Puwede naman pag-ingatan iyong mga ibang sakit na pumapatay sa tao. Siguro ay dadagdagan lang ninyo na magkaroon kayo ng tiwala na hindi ito papatay sa inyo ngayon o bukas, sapagkat hindi pa namin alam hanggang ngayon, wala pa nga akong maisagot kay Congressman Atienza, e. Para po naman pumanatag ang ating bayan, ang ating mga tahanan, at ‘pag nagkaroon ng trangkaso ang isang miyembro ng pamilya, hindi po natataranta, katulad ko ngayon. Dahil maraming mga pangyayari na hindi natin maipaliwanag.

And one day, a vaccine, may be soon discovered, and people will again spend billions of pesos all over the world. We are all being (stamped?) by some people here, by some institutional greed. Dahil hindi natin talagang alam kung ano ang puno’t dulo ng lahat ng ito. Puwedeng gawa ito ng tao. Puwede itong gawa ng mga makapangyarihang bansa. Biktima tayong lahat. Thank you for your presence.

SEC. DUQUE. Salamat din po.

At this juncture, on motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), the Chair recognized Senior Deputy Minority Leader Janette L. Garin to ask her questions.

QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE GARIN (J.) AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE

REP. GARIN (J.). Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, of course, the DOH family and the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) family under the able leadership of Secretary Duque, magandang hapon po sa lahat.

SEC. DUQUE. Good afternoon, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Secretary, earlier, I heard a colleague who was somehow afraid, and correct me if I’m wrong, but I heard the words “nakakatakot” because we are incapable, we don’t have the experts,

we don't have the know-how, and we probably are not equipped to answer a situation that China is facing now. Do you confirm or deny the statement?

SEC. DUQUE. Your Honor, we are ready in terms of the infrastructure, and the technical capability is available—the RITM and its sub-national laboratories. So, I think, at this point, there's nothing to doubt—the capability of the DOH in mounting an effective response to this emerging coronavirus.

REP. GARIN (J). Mr. Speaker, distinguished Secretary, would you agree with me if we boast and say that, in fact, not only in the Philippines, that even in research centers all over the world and even in the World Health Organization, there are a lot of Filipino experts and Filipino scientists? Totoo po ba ito o hindi?

SEC. DUQUE. Oo, totoo po iyan and we stand proud of our people in that regard.

REP. GARIN (J). Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. Uulitin ko lang po, hindi po tayo dapat mabahala dahil hindi po incapable ang Pilipinas, marami po tayong eksperto, marami po ang may know-how, and we are fully equipped. We have been through SARS that was a lot scary because during SARS wala pong alam ang mga tao dito at wala tayong gamit. When we had MERS-CoV, we were partially equipped, and when we had Ebola we were almost fully equipped and after Ebola, now, the nCoV 2019 is here, we actually have RITM whose laboratory is already a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory. Ang ibig po nating sabihin nandiyan na po iyong mga ospital, nandiyan po iyong mga gamit, nandiyan po iyong mga tao. Every time walang outbreak, walang emerging infectious disease, sarado po iyon. Pero kapag mayroong sakit na nangyayari, all triggers in one push, at the fingertip of the Secretary of Health. Am I right, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Secretary?

SEC. DUQUE. Certainly, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J). So, sinasabi ninyo po na lahat ito are in place? Kailangan lang with a push button. When you do the command, when you call a command conference, everybody moves and they are continuously trained and continuously updated. Tama po ba?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Your Honor. That's the reason why we have this command conference today, and constantly in close coordination with all of our

regional offices and DOH-retained hospitals and medical centers.

REP. GARIN (J). Mr. Speaker, kalimitan po kapag mayroong sakit na ganito, ang agad-agad na sinasabi, "The Department of Health transforms into a swan." May the Honorable Secretary expound on this?

SEC. DUQUE. Ano ba iyong swan?

REP. GARIN (J). Swan.

SEC. DUQUE. Oo.

REP. GARIN (J). Ano iyong swan? Itik? Swan. Swan.

SEC. DUQUE. I'm not aware of the literal or the figurative...

REP. GARIN (J). Yeah, okay. Mr. Speaker, Honorable Secretary, the reason why the Philippines has been called the swan because every time there is an emerging infectious disease, the whole DOH family would appear so calm at the outside but severely paddling below because we are extremely prepared.

SEC. DUQUE. Yes.

REP. GARIN (J). Kaya minsan kaya po ganoon ang nilalabas because while all the experts prepare sa baba, paddling for survival and in preparation—pre-empting every move and every transmission hindi naman po puwede na bawat galaw nila ay sabihin nila sa tao lalo na kapag ikaw ay hindi kasama doon sa pag-aaral dahil baka ikaw ay matakot. Tama po ba ito?

SEC. DUQUE. Tama po. I think that's a way of characterizing the DOH. We are very hardworking, professional civil servants quietly doing their jobs but they are dedicated, they are committed.

REP. GARIN (J). So, ibig sabihin, Mr. Speaker...

SEC. DUQUE. and technically proficient.

REP. GARIN (J). Honorable Secretary, marami ang ginagawa sa ilalim na hindi nakikita sa taas because the preparation is done silently but efficiently.

SEC. DUQUE. Tama po kayo.

REP. GARIN (J). Thank you.

SEC. DUQUE. ... Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Secretary. Mr. Speaker, allow me to commend Secretary Duque and the DOH family for seeking the guidance of the World Health Organization. To reiterate, WHO is the authority, has the convening power, has a global coordinating mandate when it comes to health and, supposedly, is objective in its decision-making.

So, the update on situations like this, and the guidance, direction and response is best taken from the World Health Organization in Geneva, not in the regional or the country level, to ensure the integrity of information and avoid fake news. And, as you understand, you're nodding and I know you are very much aware of this, even the World Health Organization approach is one who have coordinated response to the situation. One message, one action, one decision. Would you affirm this, Mr. Secretary, distinguished Speaker?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, certainly, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Dagdag po, Mr. Speaker, kanina may mga hinaing at may mga—at natatakot iyong iba, baka daw po nang binawasan ang budget ng Department of Health ay hindi magawan ng ospital, hindi malagyan ng mga laboratoryo, at hindi natin masugpo ang sitwasyon na ito.

However, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Secretary, as I have been part of your family before, I was with the RITM family when we pushed, initiated, bidden out and started the construction of an RITM Biosafety Laboratory Level 3. Does the Secretary confirm this?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Your Honor. It continues to operate.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished honorable Secretary, puwede po bang malaman ng ating mga Kongresista at ng sambayanang Pilipino, ano po ba ang ibig sabihin ng Biosafety Laboratory Level 3?

SEC. DUQUE. It's a bit technical, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. I'll just ...

REP. GARIN (J.). Would you like me to laymanize it?

SEC. DUQUE. Sure, if you do, as you've been very much part of the RITM family, you'd be in

a much authoritative position to characterize the Biosafety Level 3 laboratory.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, a BSL, a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory, the RITM is actually the extreme preparation para kapag mayroong mga virus o may mga sakit na hindi pa kilala ay mayroon tayong kakayahan na makilala at sugpuin ito, at mayroon tayong kakayahan na gumapang at umakasyon agad. Iyan po ang ibig sabihin.

This laboratory was not present during the time of SARS, MERS-CoV and Ebola pero ito ang naging basehan. Ano po ba ang ibig sabihin nito? Kailangan ba itong dagdagan? Kasi, marami po ang nananawagan, Mr. Secretary, na baka puwedeng dagdagan iyong mga BSL-3. But, the problem here is that it is a very expensive laboratory to maintain. We do not need a budget to create another laboratory because it might end up as a white elephant.

And, the reason, honorable Speaker, distinguished colleagues, na kailangan pang ipadala sa Australia at tayo ay naghihintay, it is not because we are not capable. We are capable as Filipinos. We have more experts than the other countries. However, kailangan po ng control. Kailangan ng control dahil ito ay bagong virus and the control ay madaling ginagawa at pinapadala sa mga bansa na may kakayanan. And, that is why, when the control arrived, last night or this morning, we can establish it in 48 hours. That is how prepared we are. That is how prepared Secretary Duque and the DOH family is. Do you affirm this, Secretary?

So, ang hinihintay natin is not really a machine na iniisip natin magko-construct, it's a control. Because, when you test for something, mayroon ka palaging control. Tingnan ninyo iyong laboratory results ninyo, cholesterol mayroong control, mayroong result. Kasi, kung wala kang control, hindi mo masabi kung talaga bang tama o hindi ang iyong resulta. Tama po ba ito, Secretary?

SEC. DUQUE. Tama po kayo. In fact, I just would like to add very briefly that certainly it is very expensive to maintain the operation of a Biosafety Level 3 lab. In fact, I was told, you need ₱3 million monthly at the minimum just to keep this.

REP. GARIN (J.). Please reiterate, Mr. Secretary, how much is it?

SEC. DUQUE. It's three million pesos a month.

REP. GARIN (J.). Only for the maintenance.

SEC. DUQUE. That is the minimum. While it's not being put to full use, you need to maintain it because the climate control, the filtration, mechanisms that have to be ensured are functional, so this is what it is. And so, you are right, Madam Representative.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Another issue that has been flooding the media, and we hear a lot of people na parang nangangapa sila, na natatakot sila, bakit ba iyong WHO hindi agad-agad nagdeklara ng public health emergency of international concern? Will the honorable Secretary, Mr. Speaker, educate the public, what does a declaration of a public health emergency of international concern mean, what are its implications?

SEC. DUQUE. Well, the—it is a matter of fact that the WHO which convened Thursday of last week, were deciding whether they would declare a public health emergency of international concern with respect to the novel coronavirus. But the data presented to them, they concluded, at least for that particular meeting, that it would be not prudent to declare a global health emergency because of the following information or data that have been gathered or collected from the ground: number one is, they are saying that of all the infected cases reported, majority were of the mild form of the coronavirus clinical manifestation; number two, that less than—I think—only about 21 percent has manifested or have manifested severe clinical symptoms, and that consistently the case fatality rate has just been hovering between 2 and 3.5 percent.

So, they will convene depending on, again, how quickly this virus continues to mutate and to what extent it will do so, nobody knows for sure, but again they are prepared to convene 10 days from the last time of their meeting.

REP. GARIN (J.). In other words, Mr. Speaker, Honorable Secretary, what you are saying is that the declaration made by WHO for diseases that are classified as public health emergency of international concern is based on the International Health Regulations of 2005. And, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, dagdag ko na lang po, ano po ba ang ibig sabihin nito? Ang ibig pong sabihin nito, is when they declare, it will be a trigger for all countries whether affected or not to spend money and contribute. Meaning to say, iyong declaration

does not have something to do na hindi inaasikaso, hindi dini-declare kasi hindi tayo dapat magsayang ng pera kung wala namang kailangan. Is that right, Mr. Secretary?

SEC. DUQUE. Precisely, Madam Representative.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Secretary, has the index case been identified for novel coronavirus?

SEC. DUQUE. In the Philippines?

REP. GARIN (J.). No, no, in China, in Wuhan, the index case.

SEC. DUQUE. I don't think so, the beginning, the beginning case where it came from.

REP. GARIN (J.). I mean, index case actually is the—iyong pinakaunang kaso, ...

SEC. DUQUE. That's right.

REP. GARIN (J.). ... it's usually established by WHO.

SEC. DUQUE. Uh-uh.

REP. GARIN (J.). Of course, WHO courses the information through you, and the identification of the index case is actually very important kasi kung maraming natatakot at kung alam mo na iyong index case, at least na-hurdle mo na step one. So, we would like to know if an index case has already been identified from China.

SEC. DUQUE. That is not clear, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Index case, like ...

SEC. DUQUE. It's the ...

REP. GARIN (J.). ... if we talk about Ebola, the index case was the child, iyong unang napasukan from the animal to human. So, in this case, has the index case been identified?

SEC. DUQUE. There has been no report based on the information given to me by our experts, the ED and the RITM...

REP. GARIN (J.). It has been identified, Sir?

SEC. DUQUE. Yes. Wala pa hong index case identified by China to the WHO.

REP. GARIN (J.). Okay, so there is no index case yet?

SEC. DUQUE. Wala pa.

REP. GARIN (J.). Okay. Mali ang sinasabi na iyong index case e nandodoon sa market? Wala iyon?

SEC. DUQUE. Wala.

REP. GARIN (J.). Hindi pa iyon?

SEC. DUQUE. Wala.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Honorable Secretary, has there been asymptomatic cases? Ibig sabihin, may mga pasyente po ba walang sintomas pero nagpositibo?

SEC. DUQUE. Ah...

REP. GARIN (J.). I'm not referring to the Philippines; I'm referring to the global situation para po mapanatag iyong kalooban ng ating mga kababayan.

SEC. DUQUE. That is not clear, Your Honor. That's why we are awaiting. In fact, the latest communications from the WHO is that although they have received reports of people who might possibly be infectious despite their not being symptomatic, is a cause for concern. However, the WHO says at the latest, that there is no science to prove at this point that there has been a case proved to be positive and yet asymptomatic. So, we are awaiting...

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes. Let me categorically state it, Honorable Secretary. Ang kinakatakutan po ng mga tao, e kasi lumabas iyong salita na maski walang sintomas, puwede ka nang makapanghawa. And that is where all this fear is emanating, kaya nagsuspend ng mga pasok. And I believe this is coming from the case in Germany, where the confirmed case actually came from a patient from China who is asymptomatic. Tama po ba iyon?

SEC. DUQUE. There has been that report, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes. But, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Secretary, kaya po natatakot ang tao na baka daw iyong mga walang sintomas e nakakapanghawa, kaya dito nag-i-start ang lahat ng

panic. But can the Honorable Secretary categorically delineate theory versus proven science with regards to asymptomatic transmission?

SEC. DUQUE. I categorically state that the WHO has not found scientific evidence to support such a theory or a hypothesis.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you.

SEC. DUQUE. So, we have to wait as the situation is theory...

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes.

SEC. DUQUE. ... Madam.

REP. GARIN (J.). That's—that's a very important response, Honorable Secretary. Ang ibig po—ang ibig po sabihin ni Secretary Duque, may mga pagdududa, kasi sa siyensya po, iyan ang theory. 'Pagka may nahawa, nag positibo, ang pinanggalingan walang sintomas, by theory you are expecting asymptomatic transmission na walang sintomas—nakakahawa ka. That remains a theory.

If that is duplicated, because this is only one case in Germany—if this is duplicated in other countries, then that is the time na dapat mag-panic tayo. So, Honorable Secretary may we request that you reiterate all these lines laymanizing these para mawala ang takot.

Last question, Your Honor, Honorable Secretary. Earlier, I was at CNN and the anchor told me that DOH and some officers advised to let the people wear masks. Once and for all, to cut this confusion, are you recommending the usage of surgical masks in the Philippines or not?

SEC. DUQUE. No. We don't—we never said that. Your Honor, what we were saying is if you have symptoms of coughs, colds, severe fever, it's safe. It is very considerate for one who feels these symptoms to cover with a surgical mask. And as you can see, I came here and I've been going around maskless. So, that's it. We never said that, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Ibig sabihin, hindi epektibo iyong surgical mask—kaya nga surgical mask, ginagamit iyan sa loob ng operating room. And Mr. Secretary, I know I'm running out of time, but because for public health purposes, may you apprise the honorable Members of Congress and the general public if you are using a surgical mask, what is the

maximum number of hours that you can use it, and how do you dispose of it?

SEC. DUQUE. Well, the surgical mask can be used for about eight hours a day, and then after that, you need to—once it's soiled and has been saturated, you have to dispose of it properly.

REP. GARIN (J.). And what is the risk of using surgical mask vis-à-vis the transmission of novel coronavirus?

SEC. DUQUE. Assuming you have the novel coronavirus, the correct or appropriate mask is the N95, which is more than the surgical mask.

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes. Thank you for that, Honorable Secretary. But what is the risk? Ano po ba ang danger na kapag tayo'y nagsurgical mask, tapos may novel coronavirus, ano ang delikado doon, Mr. Speaker? Because we're running out of time. Let me answer the question. Napakahirap po kapag ikaw ay nagsurgical mask na wala namang epekto against the novel coronavirus because you have a tendency to keep on touching the mask. So, kung nahawakan mo iyong virus—novel coronavirus, somewhere bumahing si Congressman Remulla, kunwari may virus, nahawakan ko, adjust ako ng adjust ng mask, mahahawa ako.

SEC. DUQUE. Yes.

REP. GARIN (J.). You create a venue by which you keep on touching your face unprotected because the mask does not have protection from unclean hands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ay, sorry, last request na lang. Honorable Secretary, earlier, the DOH had press conferences. It pains us to see that hospitals are being mentioned. Moving forward, can we have the assurance that from now on, no hospitals whatever, even for PUIs or other suspected patients should be announced?

SEC. DUQUE. Sorry. Pardon me, again, Madam Representative.

REP. GARIN (J.). Can you give us the assurance that anybody in the Department or anybody involved in the press conferences should refrain from mentioning the hospitals where there are patients? Because earlier...

SEC. DUQUE. Yes, Ma'am.

REP. GARIN (J.) ... there's a conference that—not today, I think the previous day—San Lazaro was mentioned. So sumunod iyong ibang mga generators of fake news and they kept on mentioning the hospitals to the detriment of public health. Because by protocol, where any patient is managed, the hospitals are never mentioned because it does more harm than good.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Honorable Secretary.

SEC. DUQUE. Thank you, Madam Representative.

At this juncture, on motion of Representative Palma, the Chair recognized Rep. France L. Castro for her questions.

QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE CASTRO (F. L.) AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat. Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Mga practical questions lang ito, Secretary Duque, para mas maintindihan ng ating mga mamamayan. So, kung sinasabi natin kanina iyong flu, iyong fever, iyong cough, iyong panghihina ng katawan, difficulty of breathing, ito iyong common na mga symptoms.

So, ang tanong, Mr. Speaker, Secretary, ano iyong kakaiba para—halimbawa, ako, mayroon ako nitong lahat ng ito na magdedetermina—pupunta na po ako sa ospital dahil may ganito, doon sa respective na sinasabi n'yong ospital, ano iyong pagkakaiba nito doon sa iba pa nating mga—sa common na mga flu at saka iyong MERS-CoV, at saka iba pa po? Isa lang po para maintindihan...

SEC. DUQUE. Salamat po, Ma'am. Batay po sa mga kasong mga pinangasiwaan sa Wuhan, China, sa mga ospital—ay ang coronavirus—maliban po sa ubo, sa sipon, sa lagnat, ito po ay puwedeng magdulot ng kakapusan sa paghinga o sa mahirap na paghihinga o difficulty of breathing. Sunod po rito ay posibleng humantong sa pneumonia at sa severe acute respiratory infection. At puwede pong magkaroon ng kumplikasyon doon din po sa kidneys, sa bato, at puwede pong mamatay din ang pasyente. At lalo na po, ang napansin nila ay kadalasan po ito iyong mga coexisting medical conditions 'no, may cancer, may...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, kapag naramdaman na po ito, ito na po iyong time na iyong isang tao ay puwede nang pumunta sa ospital?

SEC. DUQUE. Ay sana huwag na po hintayin na humantong pa sa ganoon.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Kaya nga po. Ano nga po iyong sinasabi nating time na dapat na ...

SEC. DUQUE. Ah, well, iyong time ho ‘pag nagkakaroon na ng paghirap ng hinga, shortness of breath ay dapat iyan po ay dinadala ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Sige. Sinasabi natin, Mr. Speaker, Secretary, na dapat handa tayo, kasi to prevent the disease dapat ready and handa po ang DOH. So, sinasabi natin may dalawang ospital lang. Paano kung mayroong infected na tao galing sa Mindanao, galing sa Visayas? And you said here, umiwas daw po sa mga animal—farm animals. Alam naman natin na 80 percent ay nasa agrikultura. At iyong ating ospital ay iyong RITM lang at saka iyong San Lazaro. So, gaano—capacitated ba iyong mga rural hospitals natin doon sa Mindanao, sa Visayas, just in case na nandoon iyong virus o magkaroon tayo ng person affected noon?

SEC. DUQUE. Mayroon po tayong subnational laboratories. Ito po iyong anim na emerging and re-emerging infectious disease referral hospitals and five subnational laboratories na sa kasalukuyan po, dahil dumating nga po iyong primer doon—para sa novel coronavirus na nandoon po sa RITM—ay kami ay kukuha pa ng sapat na bilang para mabigyan o ma-distribute dito sa mga subnational laboratories.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, mayroon na po. Kumpleto po tayo sa Mindanao at saka sa Visayas?

SEC. DUQUE. May kasama po sa Mindanao.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Kasi bukas na bukas po iyong ating mga port.

SEC. DUQUE. Dalawa po sa Mindanao, Madam Representative.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, so, mayroon po ba tayong enough na budget para diyan?

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Hernandez relinquished the Chair to Speaker Alan Peter “Companero” S. Cayetano.

QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE CASTRO (F. L.) AND ANSWERS OF SECRETARY DUQUE (Continuation)

SEC. DUQUE. So far, mayroon pa.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, by the way, magkano po ba iyong ginastos natin doon sa Australia, iyong pagpapa-test?

SEC. DUQUE. Ah, maliit lang ho iyon. We can give you the cost, how much was—hindi, ang tanong ninyo po ay kung magkano ginastos sa Australia iyong laboratory test?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Opo.

SEC. DUQUE. Wala ho kaming datos right now, but that is not really substantial, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay.

SEC. DUQUE. But, however, ang sum allotment na ibinigay natin sa mga referral labs and hospitals ay ang total po ay ₱5 million.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, ina-assure ninyo po—magkano po ba ang total budget natin para dito sa mga infectious diseases? Kasi hindi lang naman itong coronavirus iyong pinaghahandaan natin. So, total po para sa budget natin ng 2020? So, sapat po ba ito doon sa—doon sa preparedness and prevention and readiness?

SEC. DUQUE. Ito pong readiness and the preparations, the budgetary support will be about ₱45 million ang requirement.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, okay na po ito.

SEC. DUQUE. Okay na po.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Sapat na po ito.

SEC. DUQUE. Sana.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, so, iyon lang po, Mr. Speaker. Thank you po, Mr. Secretary. So, mahalaga lang po dito iyong preparedness natin at saka iyong sa prevention.

TERMINATION OF QUESTION HOUR

On motion of Majority Leader Romualdez (F.M.), there being no objection, the Body terminated the Question Hour.

REMARKS OF SPEAKER CAYETANO (A.P.)

Speaker Cayetano thanked Secretary Duque and the whole DOH family for being proactive

and for coming to the House of Representatives to enlighten the Members on the controversial 2019-nCoV. Speaker Cayetano assured Secretary Duque of the Body's full support of the department's undertakings through budget allocation and appropriate legislation.

REMARKS OF SECRETARY DUQUE

Secretary Duque expressed his gratitude to the Body for allowing the DOH to provide the latest information on the 2019-nCoV, and gave assurance of the agency's utmost efforts in addressing the health concern. He also said that the Department would be in touch with the House of Representatives should there be a need for additional funding.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

On motion of Majority Leader Romualdez (F.M.), the Chair suspended the session at 4:49 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:56 p.m., the session resumed with Deputy Speaker Hernandez presiding.

ROLL CALL

Thereupon, on motion of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Chair directed the Secretary General to call the Roll and the following Members were present:

Abante	Aumentado
Abellanos	Babasa
Abu	Bagatsing
Abueg-Zaldivar	Balindong
Abunda	Barba
Acop	Barzaga
Acosta	Bascug
Acosta-Alba	Bautista
Advincula	Belmonte
Agabas	Biron
Agarao	Bolilia
Albano	Bondoc
Almario	Bordado
Alonte	Bravo
Alvarez (F.)	Brosas
Alvarez (P.)	Cabatbat
Amatong	Cabochan
Angara	Cagas
Arenas	Calderon
Atienza	Calixto

Caminero	Geron
Caoagdan	Go (E.C.)
Castelo	Go (M.)
Castro (F.L.)	Gonzaga
Castro (F.H.)	Gonzales (A.)
Cayetano (A.P.)	Gonzales (N.)
Cayetano (M.L.)	Gonzalez
Celeste	Gorriceta
Chatto	Guico
Chipeco	Guya
Chungalao	Hataman
Co (E.)	Hernandez
Cojuangco	Hofer
Crisologo	Javier
Cua	Kho (E.)
Cuaresma	Kho (W.)
Dagooc	Labadlabad
Dalipe	Lacson
Dalog	Lacson-Noel
Datol	Lagman
Daza	Lagon
De Jesus	Lara
de Venecia	Lazatin
Del Mar	Legarda
Delos Santos	Lim
Deloso-Montalla	Lopez
Dimaporo (M.K.)	Loyola
Duterte	Lusotan
Dy (F.)	Macapagal Arroyo
Dy (F.M.C.)	Maceda
Ebcas	Madrona
Elago	Malapitan
Erice	Mangaoang
Ermita-Buhain	Marcoleta
Escudero	Mariano-Hernandez
Espina	Mariño
Fariñas (R.C.)	Marquez
Fariñas I (R.C.)	Martinez
Fernandez	Mercado
Fernando	Momo
Ferrer (J.M.)	Nieto
Ferrer (L.)	Noel
Fortun	Nogralas (J.J.)
Fortuno	Nolasco
Frasco	Oaminal
Garbin	Ong (J.)
Garcia (J.E.)	Ong (R.)
Garcia (P.J.)	Ortega
Garin (J.)	Ouano-Dizon
Garin (S.)	Pacquiao (A.)
Gasataya	Pacquiao (R.)
Gatchalian	Paduano
Gato	Palma

Pancho	Suntay
Peña	Sy-Alvarado
Pichay	Taduran
Pimentel	Tallado
Pineda	Tambunting
Plaza	Tan (A.)
Puno	Tejada
Quimbo	Teves (J.)
Radaza	Tiangco
Ramirez-Sato	Tolentino
Remulla	Torres-Gomez
Revilla	Tulfo
Reyes	Tupas
Rivera	Tutor
Robes	Ty (A.)
Rodriguez	Ty (D.)
Roman	Umali (M.V.)
Romero	Unabia
Romualdez (F.M.)	Ungab
Romualdez (Y.M.)	Uy (J.)
Romualdo	Uy (R.)
Romulo	Valeriano
Roque	Vargas
Sacdalan	Veloso
Salceda	Vergara
Salimbangon	Villafuerte
Salo	Villanueva (E.)
Sanchez	Villanueva (N.)
Sangcopan	Villar
Santos-Recto	Villarica
Sarmiento	Violago
Savellano	Yap (E.)
Singson	Zamora (R.)
Singson-Meehan	Zamora (W.K.)
Suansing (E.)	Zarate
Suansing (H.)	Zubiri

With 218 Members responding to the Call, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum. (See Appendix)

APPROVAL OF JOURNAL NO. 35

On motion of Rep. Marlyn “Len” B. Alonte, there being no objection, the Body approved Journal No. 35 dated January 27, 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GUESTS

At this point, Representative Alonte acknowledged the presence in the Session Hall of the guests of Reps. Sarah Jane I. Elago and Lolita T. Javier.

ADOPTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS

On successive motions of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body considered the following House Resolutions contained in various committee reports submitted by the committees indicated hereunder; dispensed with the reading of the texts of the measures without prejudice to their insertion into the records of the House; and unanimously adopted the same:

Submitted by the Committee on Cooperatives Development:

1. House Resolution No. 423 as contained in Committee Report No. 132, entitled: “RESOLUTION COMMENDING BAAO PARISH MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE FOR ITS EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AND LASTING COMMITMENT AS A PARTNER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE”;
2. House Resolution No. 425 as contained in Committee Report No. 134, entitled: “RESOLUTION COMMENDING BARBAZA MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE FOR ITS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP AS A COOPERATIVE AND FOR ITS SIGNIFICANT ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION TO COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT”;
3. House Resolution No. 424 as contained in Committee Report No. 135, entitled: “RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE MINDANAO ALLIANCE OF SELF-HELP SOCIETIES-SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE CENTER (MASS-SPECC) COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR SPEARHEADING ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN MINDANAO”;
4. House Resolution No. 510 as contained in Committee Report No. 136, entitled: “RESOLUTION COMMENDING STA. CRUZ SAVINGS AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE FOR ITS REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE
GROWTH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE”;

as reported out by the Committees on Government Reorganization, Disaster Management, Ways and Means, and Appropriations.

Submitted by the Committee on Foreign Affairs:

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the Bill, to wit:

5. House Resolution No. 630 as contained in Committee Report No. 168, entitled: “RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE CITY OF CALBAYOG, PROVINCE OF SAMAR”;
6. House Resolution No. 631 as contained in Committee Report No. 169, entitled: “RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN”;
7. House Resolution No. 632 as contained in Committee Report No. 170, entitled: “RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BUGALLON, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN”;
8. House Resolution No. 633 as contained in Committee Report No. 171, entitled: “RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE CITY OF KIDAPAWAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO”; and
9. House Resolution No. 634 as contained in Committee Report No. 172, entitled: “RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE CITY OF VIGAN, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR.”

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER RESILIENCE, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.”

Thereafter, on motion of Representative Palma, the Chair recognized Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez, chairperson of the Committee on Disaster Management, for her sponsorship speech.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF REPRESENTATIVE TORRES-GOMEZ**

Representative Torres-Gomez initially commended the efforts of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, local government units, and other concerned government agencies in responding to the relief efforts of the victims of the Taal Volcano eruption. She stressed however that the current system is functionally fragmented in the absence of a single department that would handle the overall responsibility and management for disaster resilience.

She stated that the proposed Department of Disaster Resilience would be the holistic approach of the government in addressing calamities with its mandate to lead, manage, direct, and implement all disaster resilience programs—from risk reduction to response, relief, recovery, and rehabilitation; absorb key disaster risk management functions of the different departments; and have joint supervision over key government units.

Representative Torres-Gomez then urged her colleagues to support the creation of the DDR considering the urgency thereof.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 200
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 5989**

Thereupon, on motion of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body resumed the consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 5989 contained in Committee Report No. 200

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
ON SECOND READING
OF HOUSE BILL NO. 5989**

Thereafter, on motion of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body suspended the consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 5989.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 142
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 5832**

Subsequently, on motion of Representative Palma, there being no objection, the Body resumed the consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 5832 contained in Committee Report No. 142 as reported out by the Committees on Government Reorganization, Overseas Workers Affairs, and Appropriations.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the Bill, to wit:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF FILIPINOS OVERSEAS AND FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.”

Representative Palma stated that the parliamentary status was that the Bill was in the period of sponsorship and debate; and on his motion, the Chair recognized Rep. Mario Vittorio “Marvey” A. Mariño, chairperson of the primary sponsoring Committee, to sponsor the same and Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate for his interpellation.

**INTERPELLATION OF
REPRESENTATIVE ZARATE**

Representative Zarate initially inquired about the rationale for the proposed creation of the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment (DFO) considering that there are already existing government agencies in-charge of the concerns and needs of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). The Sponsor explained that the creation of the DFO was a desire of OFWs to provide them direct and better services. Representative Zarate however said that the new department will just add another layer in the bureaucracy.

Representative Zarate and Mariño then discussed the increasing number of Filipinos leaving for overseas work and the issue of unemployment in the country. The former stressed that the creation of the DFO will only strengthen the country’s labor export policy, and will not solve unemployment without clear policies on job creation such as job matching and national industrialization.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Hernandez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Evelina G. Escudero.

Representative Zarate observed that the government will just pass on to the proposed department its responsibility to promote and protect the interests of the labor sector; and cited statistics on its very low rate of job creation. Representative Mariño explained that the proposed department will do everything in its power to create jobs and help workers find the right jobs; and pointed out that the labor sector had been clamoring for such an office for a long time.

Representative Zarate then argued about the inter-agency coordination and possible duplication of functions considering that the Department of Labor and Employment is doing the same coordination work with the Department of Foreign Affairs when it comes to OFW concerns. He also debated with the Sponsor the issues with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration as it will remain an attached agency to the proposed DFO; possible displacement with the proposed reorganization; and the provision on the mandatory review of the Congressional Oversight Committee on the relevance and practicality of maintaining the department.

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
ON SECOND READING
OF HOUSE BILL NO. 5832**

On motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), there being no objection, the Body suspended the consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 5832.

**MANIFESTATION OF
MINORITY LEADER ABANTE**

Recognized by the Chair upon motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), Minority Leader Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. manifested his desire to be coauthor of House Bills No. 5829 and 5869.

**ADDITIONAL COAUTHOR
OF HOUSE BILLS NO. 5829 AND 5869**

Thereupon, on motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), there being no objection, the Body approved to include Minority Leader Abante as coauthor of House Bills No. 5829 and 5869.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

On motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.) there being no objection, the Body proceeded to the Additional Reference of Business.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read on First Reading the title of the following Resolution which was referred to the appropriate committee indicated hereunder:

House Resolution No. 677, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HONORABLE AUGUSTO 'BOBOY' SYJUCO, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF ILOILO DURING THE ELEVENTH, TWELFTH AND FIFTEENTH CONGRESSES.”

By Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand) and Abante
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADOPTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 677

On successive motions of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), there being no objection, the Body considered House Resolution No. 677, entitled: “RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HONORABLE AUGUSTO 'BOBOY' SYJUCO, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF ILOILO DURING THE ELEVENTH, TWELFTH AND FIFTEENTH CONGRESSES”; dispensed with the reading of the text of the measure without prejudice to its insertion into the records of the House, as copies thereof had been distributed to the Members; and unanimously adopted the same.

ELECTION OF MAJORITY MEMBERS TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES

On successive motions of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), there being no objection, the Body elected the following Members of the Majority to the committees specified hereunder:

Committee on Foreign Affairs

(as member)

Rep. Shernee A. Tan

Committee on Trade and Industry

(as member)

Rep. Shernee A. Tan

Committee on Economic Affairs

(as member)

Rep. Shernee A. Tan

Committee on Transportation

(as member)

Rep. Shernee A. Tan

Committee on Public Order and Safety

(as member)

Rep. Jose “Bong” J. Teves Jr.

Committee on Games and Amusements

(as member)

Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

On motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), the Chair suspended the session at 6:28 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

The session resumed at 6:29 p.m.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GUESTS

At this point, Representative Fariñas (R.C.) acknowledged the presence in the Session Hall of guests of Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr. and Representative Elago.


ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

On motion of Representative Fariñas (R.C.), there being no objection, the Chair declared the

session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, February 3, 2020.

It was 6:30 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


JOSE LUIS G. MONTALES
Secretary General

Approved on February 4, 2020.

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

Printed copies of the following measures were distributed to the Members during the session:

1. House Bill No. 5422, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER OF EVERY YEAR AS THE 'NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH' IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY"
2. House Bill No. 5829, entitled: "AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING VALUES EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM BY INCORPORATING 'GOOD MANNERS AND RIGHT CONDUCT' AS A SUBJECT IN KINDERGARTEN UP TO THE GRADE 3 LEVEL"
3. House Bill No. 5869, entitled: "AN ACT DEFINING ELECTRONIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN, PROVIDING PROTECTIVE MEASURES, AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9262, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'ANTI-VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN ACT OF 2004' "
4. House Bill No. 5888, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE THIRD DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF M'LANG, PROVINCE OF COTABATO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

Congress of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Philippines

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE*Journal No. 37***Wednesday, January 29, 2020**

	ABANTE		BORDADO	**	DUTERTE
*	ABAYA		BRAVO		DY (F.)
	ABELLANOSA		BROSAS		DY (F.M.C.)
	ABU	****	BULUT	****	DY (I.P.)
	ABUEG-ZALDIVAR	**	BUSTOS		EBCAS
	ABUNDA		CABATBAT	****	ECLEO
	ACOP		CABOCHAN		ELAGO
	ACOSTA	**	CABREDO	****	ENVERGA
	ACOSTA-ALBA	**	CAGAS		ERICE
****	ADIONG		CALDERON	****	ERIGUEL
**	ADVINCULA		CALIXTO		ERMITA-BUHAIN
	AGABAS		CAMINERO		ESCUDERO
**	AGARAO	****	CAMPOS		ESPINA
****	AGLIPAY	****	CANAMA	**	ESPINO
****	AGUINALDO		CAOAGDAN	****	ESTRELLA
**	ALBANO	**	CARI		FARIÑAS (R.C.)
**	ALMARIO		CASTELO		FARIÑAS I (R.C.)
	ALONTE		CASTRO (F.L.)		FERNANDEZ
	ALVAREZ (F.)		CASTRO (F.H.)		FERNANDO
**	ALVAREZ (G.)		CAYETANO (A.P.)		FERRER (J.M.)
	ALVAREZ (P.)		CAYETANO (M.L.)	**	FERRER (L.)
****	AMANTE-MATBA		CELESTE	****	FLORES
	AMATONG		CHATTO		FORTUN
**	ANDAYA		CHIPECO		FORTUNO
	ANGARA		CHUNGALAO		FRASCO
**	ARAGONES	**	CO (A.N.)	****	FUENTEBELLA
**	ARBISON		CO (E.)	****	GAITE
	ARENAS		COJUANGCO		GARBIN
****	ARROYO	****	COLLANTES		GARCIA (J.E.)
	ATIENZA		CRISOLOGO		GARCIA (P.J.)
	AUMENTADO		CUA	*	GARCIA (V.)
	BABASA		CUARESMA		GARIN (J.)
	BAGATSING	**	CUEVA		GARIN (S.)
	BALINDONG	****	CULLAMAT		GASATAYA
*	BAÑAS-NOGRALES		DAGOOC		GATCHALIAN
	BARBA		DALIPE		GATO
*	BARBERS		DALOG	**	GERON
****	BARONDA		DATOL		GO (E.C.)
	BARZAGA		DAZA		GO (M.)
	BASCUG		DE JESUS		GONZAGA
	BAUTISTA		DE VENECIA		GONZALES (A.)
**	BAUTISTA-BANDIGAN	**	DEFENSOR (L.)		GONZALES (N.)
	BELMONTE	****	DEFENSOR (M.)		GONZALEZ
****	BENITEZ		DEL MAR		GORRICETA
****	BERNOS		DELOS SANTOS		GUICO
****	BIAZON		DELOSO-MONTALLA	****	GULLAS
**	BILLONES	**	DIMAPORO (A.)		GUYA
	BIRON		DIMAPORO (M.K.)	*	HARESCO
	BOLILIA	****	DUAVIT		HATAMAN
	BONDOC	**	DUJALI		HERNANDEZ

**	HERRERA-DY		OUANO-DIZON	****	SUAREZ (D.)
	HOFER		PACQUIAO (A.)		SUNTAY
****	JALOSJOS		PACQUIAO (R.)		SY-ALVARADO
	JAVIER	****	PADIERNOS		TADURAN
**	JIMENEZ		PADUANO		TALLADO
	KHO (E.)		PALMA		TAMBUNTING
	KHO (W.)	**	PANCHO	****	TAN (A.S.)
****	KHONGHUN	****	PANOTES		TAN (A.)
	LABADLABAD		PEÑA	****	TAN (SAMIER)
	LACSON		PICHAY	****	TAN (S.A.)
	LACSON-NOEL		PIMENTEL	****	TAN (SHERNEE)
	LAGMAN		PINEDA		TEJADA
	LAGON		PLAZA	****	TEVES (A.)
	LARA		PUNO		TEVES (J.)
	LAZATIN		QUIMBO		TIANGCO
****	LEACHON		RADAZA		TOLENTINO
	LEGARDA		RAMIREZ-SATO		TORRES-GOMEZ
	LIM	***	RAMOS		TULFO
****	LIMKAICHONG		REMULLA		TUPAS
	LOPEZ		REVILLA		TUTOR
	LOYOLA		REYES		TY (A.)
	LUSOTAN	**	RIVERA		TY (D.)
	MACAPAGAL ARROYO		ROBES	***	UMALI (A.)
	MACEDA		RODRIGUEZ		UMALI (M.V.)
	MADRONA		ROMAN		UNABIA
	MALAPITAN		ROMERO		UNGAB
	MANGAOANG		ROMUALDEZ (F.M.)		UY (J.)
****	MANGUDADATU		ROMUALDEZ (Y.M.)		UY (R.)
	MARCOLETA		ROMUALDO		VALERIANO
	MARIANO-HERNANDEZ		ROMULO	****	VALMAYOR
	MARIÑO		ROQUE		VARGAS
	MARQUEZ		SACDALAN	***	VARGAS ALFONSO
	MARTINEZ	****	SAGARBARRIA	****	VELASCO
****	MATBA	***	SAKALURAN		VELOSO
****	MATUGAS		SALCEDA		VERGARA
****	MENDOZA		SALIMBANGON	****	VILLA
	MERCADO		SALO		VILLAFUERTE
	MOMO		SANCHEZ	**	VILLANUEVA (E.)
****	NATIVIDAD-NAGAÑO		SANGCOPAN		VILLANUEVA (N.)
**	NAVA		SANTOS-RECTO		VILLAR
	NIETO		SARMIENTO	****	VILLARAZA-SUAREZ
	NOEL	****	SAULOG		VILLARICA
	NOGRALES (J.J.)		SAVELLANO		VIOLAGO
****	NOGRALES (J.F.F.)	****	SIAO	**	YAP (E.)
	NOLASCO	***	SILVERIO	****	YAP (V.)
**	NUÑEZ-MALANYAON		SINGSON	****	YU
	OAMINAL		SINGSON-MEEHAN	**	ZAMORA (R.)
**	OLIVAREZ	****	SINSUAT		ZAMORA (W.K.)
	ONG (J.)		SUANSING (E.)		ZARATE
	ONG (R.)		SUANSING (H.)		ZUBIRI
	ORTEGA	****	SUAREZ (A.)		

* Appeared after the Roll Call

** Section 71, Rule XI of the Rules of the House

(Attended committee meetings as authorized by the Committee on Rules/Attended meetings of the CA, HRET, or bicameral conference committees/
On official mission as approved by the Speaker)

*** Officially notified the House, through the Secretariat, of their absence

**** Absent without notice

(Subject to correction/s that may appear in the Annual Journal)