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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food jt. w/ the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Technical Working Group)	HR 1345	Deputy Speaker Herrera-Dy	Investigation into the untimely and irresponsible opening of floodgates of dams and watersheds in Luzon during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Joseph "Jojo" Lara (3rd District, Cagayan), terminated its deliberations on the issues raised relative to House Resolutions 1345, 1348, and 1369. This meeting was a hybrid one, wherein Rep. Lara conducted the physical meeting at the Pulsar Hotel in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Province, while other Committee Members attended it virtually via Zoom.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Lara expressed his gratitude to Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco (Marinduque) for authorizing the conduct of this on-site meeting and an ocular inspection of the Magat Dam located at the boundary between the municipality of Alfonso Lista in Ifugao Province and the municipality of Ramon in Isabela Province.</p> <p>Rep. Lara mentioned that the joint TWG was created to identify the cause of the massive flooding in the province of Cagayan in November 2020; review the position papers submitted by government agencies on the resolutions; and harmonize government's flood control plans, programs, and projects to avoid the recurrence of such disaster in the future.</p> <p>The Chair also made a recap of the results of the initial deliberation on the three resolutions last November 24, 2020, during which various agencies gave their reports on what transpired on November 11 and 12, 2020 when Typhoon Ulysses struck Isabela, Cagayan, and neighboring provinces.</p> <p>In today's meeting, resource persons from the government presented an update on their respective programs, projects, and activities to prevent the recurrence of the destructive flooding in the area.</p> <p>NIA-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System (MARIIS) Dam and Reservoir Division acting Division Manager Carlo Ablan reported that the Magat Dam protocol on dam discharge was revised following the flooding incident. Additional sediment catchment structures in the Magat Reservoir are being constructed and existing structures are being strengthened as solutions for sedimentation deposition. In addition to these measures, Ablan said that reforestation and planting of hardwood species</p>
	HR 1348	Speaker Velasco	Inquiry into the severe and unprecedented flooding in the Provinces of Cagayan and Isabela during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses	
	HR 1369	Rep. Lara	Inquiry into the massive flooding in the Province of Cagayan caused by Typhoon Ulysses and water released from the Magat Dam with the end goal of identifying needed infrastructure projects and government intervention programs to prevent similar disaster from happening again	

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>in the area is being done as part of the NIA's development plan for watersheds.</p> <p>The Committee requested NIA-MARIIS to provide the concerned local governments a copy of the new Magat Dam protocol on dam discharge for their information.</p> <p>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Region II Regional Director Dionisio Ledres reported that NEDA has favorably endorsed the funding for several infrastructure projects in the area to mitigate flooding.</p> <p>DENR Region II Assistant Regional Director Ismael Manaligod gave an update on the Cagayan River Restoration Project, which is being undertaken by the DENR in partnership with the DPWH, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the Department of Transportation. Aside from dredging activities, Manaligod said that the DENR is also implementing nature-based solutions, such as planting bamboos along the riverbanks to stabilize the same.</p> <p>According to Manaligod, the DPWH has identified an area of more than 32 kilometers from the Cagayan River Delta in Aparri, Cagayan as part of the river dredging zone. Phase I of the three-phase river dredging project is already ongoing. Manaligod also said that the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region II, has already issued Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECC) to dredger-operators for the first segment of the project.</p> <p>Engr. Jerry Fano from the DPWH's Unified Project Management Office - Flood Control Management Cluster confirmed that the DPWH is doing dredging works in three priority sites along Cagayan River. He said that to date, the DPWH has already removed 344,305 cubic meters of sand from the sandbars located in Barangay Bangag in the municipality of Lal-lo, which constrict the flow of water in that portion of the river. Dredging activities are also being undertaken by the DPWH in the other two priority areas in the municipality of Gattaran, specifically in barangays Dummun and Casicallan Norte. (Cagayan River is the longest, largest, and widest river in the country. It is located in the Cagayan Valley region, traversing the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Isabela, and Cagayan.)</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Region II Director Narciso Edillo apprised the body that the DA has initiated the construction of small water impounding projects and diversion dams in the tributaries of Cagayan River. He also said that planting of trees along the riverbanks and corn in sloping areas is being encouraged to reduce soil erosion and prevent siltation of the tributaries of Cagayan River.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Region II Director Leon Rafael Jr. made several recommendations in support of the flood mitigation projects in Region II, among which are: upgrading of early warning and flood forecasting systems; construction of flood control structures; strengthening of the National and Regional Committees on Dam Safety; and strengthening community participation in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) by incorporating DRRM programs and activities in social welfare programs such as the <i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program</i>.</p> <p>In addition, OCD-Cordillera Autonomous Region Operations Section Chief Frankie Cortez suggested the allocation of more funds for the establishment of an integrated community-based early warning system. He also requested the Committee to institutionalize a "ridge-to-reef" approach as a holistic intervention in addressing the problems arising from the use of resources in forest ridges that affect the coastal areas down to the coral reefs.</p> <p>Aparri Municipal Mayor Bryan Dale Chan asked why the mouth of the Cagayan River Basin or the river delta, which is located in Aparri, is included in the dredging program. He pointed out that based on the report of DPWH on the areas that contribute to the flooding in the Cagayan River, Aparri was not included.</p> <p>DENR Region II Assistant Regional Director Manaligod and Cagayan Provincial Planning and Development Officer Roland Calabazon Jr. replied that the river delta should be dredged to create a passageway for larger vessels carrying dredging equipment that must move along the Cagayan River Basin. Manaligod added that at present, only small vessels can pass through the river delta due to heavy siltation.</p> <p>On the request of Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma that concerned district representatives should be part of the Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) tasked to implement the Cagayan River Restoration Project, Manaligod said that he will inform the IAC regarding this request.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur) inquired why the DENR River Basin Control Office (RBCO) did not have any report on its programs aimed at preventing flooding in the Cagayan River Basin. He pointed out that RBCO is the lead agency for all government initiatives to rehabilitate and develop the country's river basins.</p> <p>RBCO Executive Director Ed Nelson Gorospe said that the mandate of the RBCO is purely coordinative and that it lacks personnel to be</p>
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<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>able to come up with and implement its own programs.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Savellano said that a separate meeting should be held to address RBCO's inadequate personnel and the corresponding budgetary requirement.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Lara asked the DENR about the requirements that local government units (LGUs) should comply with to be included in the dredging program of the DENR. Manaligod said that to start the process, the LGU should submit a formal request to the DENR for the inclusion of a waterway in its area in the dredging program.</p> <p>Aparri Municipal Administrator Mary Jane Tadili requested the DENR to coordinate closely with the LGUs in the implementation of its programs and to properly inform the residents who will be affected or displaced by the dredging activities.</p> <p>Manaligod said that the DENR will strive to improve its coordination with the LGUs. He also said that consultations with the affected residents are being made, but that during this pandemic, the DENR and DPWH resorted to virtual public consultations because of the restrictions related to the pandemic. Manaligod added that the DENR will offer alternative livelihood programs and relocation sites for the residents who will be affected by the dredging activities.</p> <p>Others who also gave their respective recommendations and inputs to address the flooding in Cagayan were: University of the Philippines Professor Ferdinand Siringan; Engr. Cris Decena, a former member of the Japan International Cooperation Agency's team that conducted a feasibility study on the Cagayan River Basin; and Fr. Manuel Vicente Catral of the Archdiocese of Tuguegarao.</p> <p>The TWG enjoined the DENR- Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to test the dredged materials from the Cagayan River for possible valuable mineral contents and to submit their findings to the joint TWG. This is in relation to the earlier statement of Manaligod that prior to the start of the dredging project, the MGB Region II conducted a geological and geochemical survey in the dredging zone to assess the presence of recoverable precious and heavy minerals that may be of economic interest to the government. Rep. Lara required the presence of a representative from a non-government organization during the extraction of the samples for testing.</p>
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