



# Committee Daily Bulletin

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Trade and Industry	HR 987	Rep. Cabatbat	Investigation into the production and importation status of poultry commodities in the country amidst the COVID-19	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1<sup>st</sup> District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco, Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, will continue its inquiry relative to the 10 House Resolutions in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Enverga said that today's meeting was called to once again discuss with the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and other concerned agencies the increasing prices of pork and meat products.</p> <p>Specifically, the Joint Committee wants to clarify the following issues and concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether or not pork importation has really brought down inflation or the rate of increase in prices over a given period of time;</li> <li>• If there are imported meat products, which are usually frozen, being sold in public wet markets that are not stored in chillers/freezers in violation of the government's policy that such frozen products should be placed in a cold storage; and</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the calibrated arrival of imported pork into the country.</li> </ul> <p>Rep. Enverga noted that three months have passed since the signing of Executive Order (EO) 128 in April, and yet the price of meat is still high in grocery stores and public markets. Likewise, the local hog raisers are still clamoring for assistance from the government as they stressed that the industry is adversely affected by the continued importation of pork and meat products, Rep. Enverga added.</p> <p>Under EO 128, for the first three months, tariff on pork imports within the minimum access volume (MAV) or in-quota imports will be reduced from 30% to 5% and for those outside the MAV or out-quota imports, from 40% to 15%. After which, for the next nine months, the tariff on in-quota imports will increase to 10% and for out-quota imports to 20%.</p> <p>Rep. Tiangco reiterated the urgent need for a</p>
	HR 1495	Rep. Vargas	Urging the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to deploy more Kadiwa rolling stores through its Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita Program, in light of the recent price increase of basic commodities in the country	
	HR 1504	Rep. Geron	Urging the DA to explain and submit a report of all programs and measures undertaken by its implementing agencies to address price instability	
	HR 1505	Rep. Geron	Investigation into the alleged shortage in the supply of meat products resulting in the escalation of prices and the status of food security in the country	
	HR 1512	Rep. Quimbo	Inquiry into the rising pork prices	
	HR1515	Rep. Cayetano (A. P.)	Urging the House of Representatives to take the lead and get the job done in making sure that prices of basic goods such as meat and vegetables are affordable by bringing all stakeholders together for the benefit of the Filipino people, uncovering the root causes of the price increase, and thereafter to coordinate with and assist the relevant government agencies in addressing the issues, with the end in view of ensuring that all citizens shall have access to sufficient, safe, and affordable food especially during this time of pandemic	
	HR 1522	Speaker Velasco	Inquiry into the rising food prices with the end in view of determining the necessary interventions to stabilize food prices and ensure the availability and affordability of food to Filipino consumers	
	HR 1526	Rep. Tambunting	Inquiry into the alarming rise in the price of basic commodities with the end in view of implementing necessary measures to ensure the accessibility of basic commodities and defend the right of every Filipino to adequate and affordable food	
	HR 1556	Rep. Zarate	Investigation into the rising of food prices, importation, and the neglect of the industry	

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>	<p>HR 1587</p>	<p>Rep. Brosas</p>	<p>of agriculture in the Philippines</p> <p>Investigation into the transportation restrictions on locally sourced pork and increased importation of pork amidst the dire state of the local livestock industry</p>	<p>comprehensive study on the price structure of agricultural commodities to determine the appropriate interventions needed. He added that a transparent breakdown of the prices of agricultural products will not only promote better understanding of the expenses associated with producing the products but will also help determine the opportunities to help reduce these costs. "Only by doing these can we claim that the government's programs to ensure accessibility, availability, and affordability of agricultural products for the consumers are on the right path," Rep. Tiangco further said.</p> <p>NEDA's Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment Staff Assistant Director Lenard Martin Guevarra reported that the country's inflation rate has decreased from 4.1 percent in June to 4.0 percent in July. He noted that for the first time since January, the inflation rate is within the government's target of 2 to 4 percent for this year. Guevarra added that meat prices fell from 49 percent to 38 percent in July, which contributed to the overall decrease in the country's inflation rate.</p> <p>Agriculture Secretary William Dar said that the Department has initiated several strategies to stabilize pork supply and prices in the country. These strategies include support to local hog industry to sustain and elevate disease control measures as well as mobilization of supply from areas that have surplus in certain agricultural products, diversification of protein sources, and augmentation of supply through importation as a last resort.</p> <p>While Dar admits that the DA still has a lot of work to do, it has made significant progress in ensuring that Filipinos have sufficient, safe, and affordable food on their tables, as well as in protecting jobs in the agriculture and agribusiness sectors especially during this time of pandemic.</p> <p>With regard to the African Swine Fever (ASF), Dar said that ASF cases in the country have significantly declined with only 29 barangays still having active ASF cases. He said that the Department continues with its campaign to eradicate the disease and to hasten the recovery of the hog industry through its intensified hog repopulation program.</p> <p>In terms of food prices, Dar reported that DA continues to strengthen price monitoring and surveillance efforts, in partnership with other government agencies, to help ensure reasonable prices in the market. Dar also said that the average prices of the regular milled rice and well-milled rice remain stable at P38 per kilo and P40 per kilo, respectively. While the price of premium rice is at P46 per kilo and special rice at P50 per kilo. Dar said DA expects the supply of rice to stay sufficient</p>
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<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>				<p>nationwide for the rest of the year and beyond.</p> <p>In addition, Secretary Dar informed the Committee that the prices of pork started to go down with frozen pork <i>kasim</i> at P220 per kilo, while frozen pork belly is priced at P250 per kilo. Dar attributed the decrease in the prices of pork meat to the implementation of EO 133 and 134, series of 2021. He opined that the temporary measures are necessary to immediately respond to the increasing pork prices while the Department is simultaneously implementing the hog repopulation program which aims to provide sufficient hogs in the coming years.</p> <p>EO 133 increased the MAV of pork meat for 2021 from 54,210 metric tons to 254,210 metric tons, provided that any unavailable balance at the end of 2021 shall not be carried over to 2022.</p> <p>With the issuance of EO 134, the reduced tariff rates under EO 128 was increased to 10% (in-quota) and 20% (out-quota) for the first three months, and 15% (in-quota) and 25% (out-quota) from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> month. Given the continuing spread of African Swine Fever and its adverse effects, the adjusted tariff rates aim to strike a balance between making pork products available and affordable, and protecting and ensuring the recovery of the local hog industry.</p> <p>The Agriculture Secretary also asked Congress to allocate more funds to DA to help the Department pursue its plans and programs towards ensuring the country's food security.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Ruth Castelo said that DTI supports the government's efforts to bring down the prices of pork. She explained that lowering the tariff on imported pork paved the way for a decrease in the prices of meat products, to the benefit of the consumers.</p> <p>Several lawmakers present during the meeting questioned if the importation of pork indeed addressed the problem of increasing pork prices and the plight of the local hog industry.</p> <p>Rep. Tiangco inquired about the effect of the entry of imported meat in the market to the prices of local meat products.</p> <p>DA's Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service Director Ramon Yedra said that DA is gradually attaining its objective of lowering the prices of locally-produced pork. He disclosed that at present, the price of pork <i>kasim</i> has dropped to P300-330 from P340-350, while pork belly is now at P360-370 from its previous price of P400.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HR 1556, said that despite</p>
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<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>				<p>the issuance of the EOs which aim to address the high price of pork due to the lack of supply locally, many people, especially the poor, still do not have access to cheaper imported frozen pork that are primarily sold in big supermarkets and grocery stores. He said that the common people could not access the commodity since most of them go to public wet markets. According to him, the EOs only benefitted the importers who gain more profit from the lowering of tariff rates on imported pork.</p> <p>Rep. Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA), author of HR 987, asked why, despite the huge increase in the volume of pork imports, the price of pork products has not gone down significantly.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary William Medrano said that there is already a gradual decrease on the prices of both imported and local meat products. However, the country is yet to feel the significant impact of pork importation on the prices of meat products because the authority to import additional 200,000 MT of pork meat was only implemented in July.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Enverga inquired if there are already imported meat being sold in the wet markets of the National Capital Region (NCR) and if cold storage facilities have been distributed to the sellers.</p> <p>Yedra said that “48% of the wet markets that the DA surveyed have available imported pork, and in those markets about 14% of the stalls are selling imported pork.” With regard to the provision of cold storage, Undersecretary Medrano answered that discussions with the local government units (LGUs) in the NCR are underway. He explained that the funds for the purchase of chillers/freezers will be downloaded to the LGUs, which will purchase the freezers and distribute the same to their intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1<sup>st</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) suggested that DA should be the one to procure all the needed chillers or freezers in order to purchase the units at a more reasonable price.</p> <p>Rep. Eufemia Cullamat (Party-List, BAYANMUNA), co-author of HR 1556, and Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HR 1587, manifested that the intent to significantly bring down pork prices by importing pork meat was never achieved. Instead, it added to the burden of local hog raisers who have yet to recover from the losses due to ASF infestation.</p> <p>National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. Chair Chester Tan lamented that the local hog</p>
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<p><i>Continuation...</i> Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Trade and Industry</p>				<p>industry could hardly compete with the price of the imported pork products due to their high cost of production. He also brought to the attention of the Committee that while Visayas and Mindanao do not have shortage in the supply of pork, a considerable amount of imported pork products are entering the regions. He asked the government to address the plight of the local hog industry which is barely surviving from the impact of the ASF and the influx of imported meat in the local market.</p> <p>Reps. Tiangco and Micaela Violago (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) asked what the DA can specifically do to help the local hog industry.</p> <p>Undersecretary Medrano said that the local hog raisers can avail themselves of assistance under the DA's Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE). This program aims to help the local hog industry recover by providing livelihood modules, piglets, feeds, drugs and biologics, and disinfectants to qualified beneficiaries. It also aims to enhance hog production in the country to ensure availability, accessibility, and affordability of pork and pork products. (<i>Source: DA website</i>)</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit to the Committee all the reports, data and documentation requested by the Members.</p>
<p><b>Economic Affairs jt. w/ Information and Communications Technology</b></p>	<p>HBs 6787, 7049 &amp; 7153</p>	<p>Reps. Tutor, Siao, and Vargas</p>	<p>Providing for a national digital transformation policy</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, and Rep. Victor Yap (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Tarlac), Chair of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills. It also agreed to use House Bill 6874 as the lead bill.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental), author of HB 6874, cited the need to accelerate the digital transformation of the economy, health, education, and bureaucracy to catalyze economic recovery and keep up with the increasingly digitalizing world. He added that the bill provides the following: a comprehensive policy for transition to a robust digital economy; smart city and digital infrastructure framework and planning with learning hubs for greater public access; and a whole-of-government approach to make governance digitally-enabled, efficient, and transparent.</p> <p>Rep. Kristine Alexie Tutor (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Bohol), author of HB 6787, said that her bill seeks to respond to the current need of the people to shift to digitalization especially amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
	<p>HB 6874</p>	<p>Rep. Benitez</p>	<p>Providing for a comprehensive policy to accelerate and harness the digital revolution to foster inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and participatory governance</p>	

<p>Continuation... Economic Affairs jt. w/ Information and Communications Technology</p>				<p>Rep. Garin sought clarification from Rep. Benitez if his bill sustains the mandate of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to capacitate the country towards digitalization of various sectors.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez affirmed that his bill also seeks to strengthen the DICT's mandate and to provide a whole-of-government approach for the implementation of ICT programs. He noted that agencies tend to operate in silos; therefore the aim of the bill is to provide complementarities and synergies to better channel the resources towards a digital economy.</p> <p>Rep. Yap asked whether it would be good to have an all-encompassing bill for digital transformation or to propose a separate bill for each area that needs to be digitally transformed such as revenue generation, cybersecurity, and education.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez admitted that the proposed law may not be exhaustive, but it provides the framework from which the transition to digital economy could start and any domain that has not been covered in the proposed law could be dealt with by the proposed National Digital Council.</p> <p>Under HB 6874, the National Digital Council, which will be placed under the Office of the President, shall formulate strategies and coordinate government policies and programs to foster digital inclusion and maximize the economic and social benefits of digital and data-driven technologies. It shall also formulate a National Digital Skills Development Strategy to provide long-term vision and direction aimed at promoting digital citizenship, ensuring that all persons understand and can take advantage of the educational, economic, and social opportunities of advanced ICT.</p> <p>Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Albay) said that the country's digital transformation should be built on efficient manual processes; client-centered and user-friendly; results-oriented; flexible and easy to modify given the rapid changes characteristic of technology; and context-specific.</p> <p>Among the government agencies that expressed their support for the bills were the following: DICT, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor and Employment, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Civil Service Commission, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Anti-Red Tape Authority, National</p>
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Continuation... Economic Affairs jt. w/ Information and Communications Technology				Library, and National Book Development Board.  The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the four bills.
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<b>Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</b>	Briefing by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on its economic plan for the Bicol Region in the next five years	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jocelyn Fortuno (5<sup>th</sup> District, Camarines Sur), listened to the presentation of NEDA on its economic plan for the Bicol Region in the next five years.</p> <p>NEDA Region V Director Agnes Espinas-Tolentino discussed the strategic direction of NEDA for the Bicol Region, focusing on the following areas: physical connectivity of islands and provinces; promotion of digital economy; establishment of more economic zones and boosting micro, small and medium enterprises and agriculture-based industries; accelerating investments in renewable energy sources; augmentation of health systems capacity and achieving herd immunity against the COVID-19; and implementation of peace-building programs pursuant to Executive Order 70, which institutionalizes the whole-of-nation approach in attaining inclusive and sustainable peace.</p> <p>NEDA also presented some of the core priority programs and projects that are already ongoing in the Bicol Region which include the establishment of farm-to-market roads, Negosyo centers, and disaster resilient evacuation centers; implementation of the new Naga Airport Development Project and Camsur Expressway Project; enhancement of strategic and national ports; modernization of rice farming; advancements in health and nutrition services and research and development initiatives in higher education institutions; and other development programs on basic education, tourism and peace-building.</p> <p>Rep. Gabriel Bordado Jr. (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Camarines Sur) asked if the Bicol Region will continue to experience economic contraction in the coming years, citing its economy's 8.4% decline in 2020 based on the report of NEDA. Espinas-Tolentino answered that it is expected to remain that way especially for the years 2021 and 2022. She said it will be difficult for the region's economy to recover if the pandemic will still continue and stricter quarantine classifications will be imposed in the region due to rising COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>On the query of Catanduanes Rep. Hector Sanchez on what mitigating measures are being undertaken to further prevent the contraction of the Bicol Region's economy, Espinas-Tolentino replied that there is a need to boost or invest more in information communication technology (ICT) businesses or industries since this sector remains to be resilient until now despite the pandemic.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Edcel Lagman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Albay) inquired on the challenges attendant to the upcoming implementation of the Supreme Court (SC) ruling on the Mandanas-Garcia petitions, which increases the Internal Revenue Allotment, now called National Tax Allotment, of local government units (LGUs). Espinas-Tolentino said the challenge will be on the capability of LGUs to identify which projects or investments should be pursued or given priority to further develop their localities. She</p>

<p>Continuation... Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</p>		<p>said this is the reason why NEDA is providing capacity building programs to LGUs in preparation for the implementation of the SC ruling starting 2022.</p> <p>As for the status of the Philippine National Railways (PNR) South Long Haul Project or the PNR Bicol, Espinas-Tolentino informed the body that the target year of completion is still 2025. However, she admitted that issues on right-of-way acquisition needs to be resolved quickly in order for the project to stay on track.</p> <p>PNR Bicol is a 639-km railway project that will link the National Capital Region, Region IV-A, and Region V with a railway system, cutting the travel time from Manila to Bicol from 12 hours via car to just six hours (<i>source: Department of Transportation website</i>).</p> <p>Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District, Masbate) requested NEDA Region V to submit its list of projects for the Bicol Region for 2022. He said this information will be the basis for the House Members belonging to the “Bicol bloc” to push for an increase in the budget of NEDA Region V in the upcoming budget deliberations in Congress.</p>
	<p>Briefing by the Department of Health (DOH) on the COVID-19 situation in the Bicol Region, including the status of the vaccination program and suggested health protocols to control the COVID-19 surge</p>	<p>The Committee listened to the presentation of the DOH on the COVID-19 situation in the Bicol Region, the status of the vaccination program, and the implementation of health protocols to control the COVID-19 surge.</p> <p>DOH Region V Director Ernie Vera reported that the top three provinces with the most cases of COVID-19 are Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon. He said that the DOH is implementing its “prevent, detect, isolate, and treat” strategy to address the COVID-19 situation in the Bicol Region.</p> <p>On the status of the vaccination program in the region, Vera reported that 509,571 constituents have received their first dose and 172,508 of them have already received the second dose of the vaccines. They are mostly those belonging to Priority Group A which includes frontline health workers, senior citizens, vulnerable individuals with comorbidities or chronic diseases, frontline personnel in essential sectors both in the public and private sectors including uniformed personnel, and the indigent population.</p> <p>Further, Vera gave a breakdown of the vaccine utilization rate by LGUs per province as follows: Catanduanes, 87%; Camarines Sur, 79%; Masbate, 77%; Camarines Norte, 74%; Sorsogon, 69%; and Albay, 68%. Overall, he said the region has a vaccine utilization rate of 80% as of August 9.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Sanchez on how to control the spread of the COVID-19 Delta Variant in the region, Vera said social distancing and other health protocols like wearing of face masks and regular hand washing should be strictly implemented and information drive on these protocols should be intensified. He also emphasized the need to accelerate the rollout of vaccines in the region.</p> <p>Before the meeting adjourned, the Members brought to the attention of the DOH Region V Director several issues and concerns on the rollout of vaccines in their respective legislative districts. Vera responded to the queries of the Members and also promised to look into some of the issues which he could not readily respond to during the meeting.</p>

<p><b>Higher and Technical Education</b></p>	<p>Briefing by concerned government agencies on their respective 2022 budget proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission on Higher Education (CHED)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, listened to the budget proposals of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for fiscal year (FY) 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Go said that the purpose of the meeting is to be informed in advance of the budget proposals of CHED and TESDA before the budget deliberations in Congress formally start. Through this, the Committee will know how best it can help to push for any possible increase in the proposed budget for the education sector.</p> <p>CHED Chair J. Prospero de Vera III said the original budget proposal of CHED for FY 2022 is P62.40 billion but the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) only approved the amount of P52.60 billion. He said the almost P10 billion budget cut was mostly taken from CHED's proposed capital outlay which is supposed to cover general administrative and support services, equipment acquisition pursuant to CHED's Information System Strategic Plan, and repairs and improvements of CHED regional offices, among others.</p> <p>According to De Vera, out of the DBM-approved P52.60 billion budget for CHED for 2022, P46.80 billion is allocated for the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education (UAQTE) Act. Although, he said, the original budget proposal of CHED for UAQTE is P54.21 billion.</p> <p>The programs under the UAQTE Act that will be funded by the P46.80 billion budget are the following: 1) free higher education (tuition and miscellaneous fees) in state universities and colleges and CHED-recognized local universities and colleges; 2) free Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in public and private institutions registered with the TESDA; 3) Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) or grants-in-aid for poor students enrolled in public and private institutions; and 4) Student Loan Program for tertiary education students.</p> <p>De Vera said that the distribution of TES has slowed down because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and restrictions in movement which prevented the beneficiaries from submitting the required documents. He explained that any delay in the submission will also slow down the processing of the documents and the allocation and release of funds. He also said that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has not yet released the TES funds for the second semester of Academic Year 2021-2022. Further, he said that the budget allocation for the Tulong Dunong Program (TDP) was not included in the 2022 proposed budget of CHED, considering that it was also not included in the 2021 General Appropriations Act.</p> <p>The TDP is a grants-in-aid program for poor students who are enrolled or will enroll in public or private higher education institutions. A student grantee is entitled to a maximum of P12,000 grant per academic year or P6,000 per semester which may be used to support the student's educational expenses and cost of living allowance. <i>(Source: CHED website)</i></p> <p>The Committee supports the restoration of the fund allocation for TDP as well as for the "Doktor Para sa Bayan Act" (Republic Act 11509) in the CHED's 2022 budget.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City) was amenable to the proposal to restore the budget allocation for the TDP, given the benefits the program provides to poor but deserving students.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Higher and Technical Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Education and Development Authority (TESDA) Skills</li> </ul>	<p>Meanwhile, Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) proposed that CHED should come up with a relief and recovery program for small private schools including their teachers and support personnel. She said these schools have either closed or are still struggling because of the low enrolment rates as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>TESDA Director General Isidro Lapeña said that the proposed 2022 budget of TESDA will be used for programs that will make TVET at par with global standards and for core programs anchored on innovation and digitalization to prepare workers for the constantly evolving world of work in this age of technological transformation.</p> <p>According to TESDA Planning Office Executive Director Rosalina Constantino, the original budget proposal of TESDA for 2022 is P15.77 billion. However, the DBM reduced it to P14.54 billion as what is now reflected in the 2022 National Expenditure Program (NEP). She explained that the P14.54 billion budget of TESDA will be divided into two tiers: P13.74 billion for Tier 1 and P800.89 million for Tier 2.</p> <p>Constantino said most of the Tier 1 budget shall be allocated for TESDA scholarship programs such as the Private Education Student Financial Assistance Program and the Training for Work Scholarship Program. Meanwhile, the Tier 2 budget shall be spent for the establishment of new innovation centers and TESDA learning centers, acquisition of new equipment, and implementation of TESDA's Medium-Term Information and Communications Technology Harmonization Initiative.</p> <p>However, Constantino said that an additional budget of P1.23 billion is needed for Tier 2 in order to fund the implementation of several laws such as the establishment of the Cordillera State Institute of Technical Education and the TESDA Training and Accreditation Center in Rizal, Occidental Mindoro. It will also fund the implementation of the Supporting Innovation in Philippine TVET System Project, which aims to modernize and reform the TVET system to enhance competitiveness and boost human capital development.</p> <p>Reps. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon) and Gabriel Bordado Jr. (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Camarines Sur) asked for an update on the distribution of the 2018 and 2019 starter toolkits for scholars in the Special Training for Employment Program (STEP), which have been delayed for at least two years due to issues in the bidding and procurement process of TESDA.</p> <p>TESDA Deputy Director General Lina Sarmiento said the distribution of the 2019 STEP toolkits is already ongoing in different parts of the country. As for the 2018 STEP toolkits, she said the fund was reverted to the Bureau of Treasury as the validity of the fund has already expired because of unresolved procurement issues.</p> <p>The Chair instructed TESDA to submit a report on the distribution of the STEP toolkits from 2018 up to the present.</p>
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