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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Creative Industry and Performing Arts (Special Committee)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Rules of Procedure for the 19th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. De Venecia was happy to mention the enactment of Republic Act 11904 or the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act and the pronouncement of the President in his recent State of the Nation Address giving priority to the creative industries towards the creation of a unique country brand. The Chair then enumerated some of the key legislative agenda of the Committee for the 19th Congress, which are: the Creative Tourism Bill; Film Archiving Bill; Creative Residency Bill; Gastronomy and Culinary Heritage Development Bill; Creative Incentives Bill; and Footwear, Leather Goods and Tannery Industry Development Bill.</p> <p>As presented during the meeting, the Committee has jurisdiction over all matters directly and indirectly involving the creative industries, including the creation, production and manufacturing, performance, broadcasting, communication and exhibition, or distribution and sale of creative work and services. The Committee also has jurisdiction over policies and programs involving audiovisual media, digital interactive media, creative services, design, publishing and printed media, performing arts, visual arts, traditional cultural expressions, cultural sites, and other such domains and industries as may be determined by the Philippine Creative Industries Development Council.</p> <p>Rep. De Venecia introduced the Committee Members for the 19th Congress along with the following Committee Vice Chairpersons: Reps. Juan Carlos "Arjo" Atayde (1st District, Quezon City), Maria Vanessa Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol), Richard Gomez, DPA (4th District, Leyte), and Jose Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental).</p> <p>Likewise, the Chair said he will be proposing to the House leadership the renaming of the Committee to "Special Committee on Creative Industries," to which Rep. Benitez agreed.</p>
Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICCP)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Internal Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Kalinga Rep. Allen Jesse Mangaoang, held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Internal Rules of Procedure for the 19th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee has jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples (ICCs/IPs) and the development of their communities."</p> <p>In his opening remarks, Rep. Mangaoang underscored the mandate of the Committee to recognize, respect, promote and protect ICCs/IPs, advance their right to self-governance, empower them to forge their own destinies, pursue their interests, and safeguard their own welfare and the integrity of their culture.</p> <p>Rep. Mangaoang introduced the Committee Members of the 19th Congress who were in attendance, namely: Vice Chairperson Rep. Peter Miguel (2nd District, South Cotabato); Members from the Majority</p>

Continuation... Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICCP)		<p>– Reps. Maximo Dalog Jr. (Mountain Province), Ed Christopher Go (2nd District, Isabela), Bai Dimple Mastura (1st District, Maguindanao and Cotabato City), and Leody “Odie” Tarriela (Occidental Mindoro); Member from the Minority, Rep. Raoul Dannel Manuel (Party-List, Kabataan); and Ex-Officio Member, Rep. Alfred Delos Santos (Party-List, Ang Probinsyano).</p> <p>The Committee Chair also informed the body of bills approved at the Committee level last Congress, which are to be refiled this present Congress. These are bills on: 1) Indigenous Community Conserved Territories and Areas; 2) IPs Civil Registration; and 3) Resource Centers for IPs.</p> <p>He likewise presented the following bills which are currently referred to the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 446 - Protecting the rights of IPs and ICCs affected by renewable energy investments in their ancestral lands, amending certain provisions of Republic Act 9513, otherwise known as the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 (Mountain Province Rep. Maximo Dalog Jr.); • HB 1064 - Ensuring equal employment opportunities to members of ICCs and preference in certain cases (Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma); • HB 3340 - Establishing a system protecting the community intellectual rights of ICCs/IPs (Rep. Dalog); and • HB 1067 - Institutionalizing IPs mandatory representation in the Province of Nueva Vizcaya and appropriating funds therefor (Rep. Cuaresma). <p>Rep. Dalog gave a brief statement on the importance of his bills, which are similar to bills filed and already taken up by the Committee during the 18th Congress.</p> <p>The NCIP was requested to submit its position papers on the bills.</p>
Social Services	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rosanna ‘Ria’ Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Rules of Procedure for the 19th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee has jurisdiction over “all matters directly and principally relating to social development and social services and interventions that develop and enhance the quality of individual and community life.”</p> <p>Rep. Vergara conveyed her gratitude to House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte) for appointing her as chairperson of this Committee which has the power and responsibility to help shape the future of the most vulnerable people in the society. Likewise, she enjoined the Committee Members to craft laws that would provide long-lasting solutions to issues and problems faced by the vulnerable sector, thereby uplifting the lives of the underprivileged <i>kababayans</i> from poverty. She said the Committee shall work closely with and give full support to the social programs and services of the Department of Social Welfare and Development under the leadership of Secretary Erwin Tulfo. She also assured the Members that all recommendations and inputs relative to the Committee's mandate will be heard and considered.</p>
Transportation	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Rules of Procedure for the 19th Congress was adopted with amendments.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i></p> <p>Transportation</p>	<p>Rep. Acop, in his opening remarks, talked about the importance of transportation as one of the prime movers of the economy. He pointed out that the suspension and reduction of the operational capacity of public transportation due to the pandemic has not only limited the sector's overall productivity but also greatly affected the lives of millions of Filipinos. He stressed that as the country recuperates from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is upon the Members of the Committee to provide "data-driven, expertise-led, and practical on-the-ground" solutions to problems surrounding the transportation sector. He expects that with the wisdom and guidance of the Members of the Committee, the Committee will be able to craft policies that will meet the needs of the Filipino people.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee has jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to land, sea and air transportation and all public utilities and services connected thereto, as well as the establishment, operation, management and regulation of airports, seaports and other mass transportation systems including light and heavy rail systems and roll on – roll off (RO-RO) systems, civil aviation, air transport agreements, transportation safety standards, air transport security, maritime security, ballast water management, ship financing, ship mortgage, maritime lines, and transportation related insurance."</p> <p>Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona moved to amend the Committee's Rules to include the creation of subcommittees that have jurisdiction over the following areas: 1) Aviation; 2) Roads; 3) Railway; and 4) Maritime.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Creative Industry and Performing Arts (Special Committee)	HR 112	Rep. De Venecia	Congratulating and commending GIGIL for winning bronze at the 2022 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity for second consecutive year	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4 th District, Pangasinan), adopted House Resolution 112 and approved the corresponding Committee Report. According to Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Jose Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3 rd District, Negros Occidental), GIGIL is an internationally renowned advertising agency and that its winning bronze in the 2022 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity brings international acclaim to the country's advertising industry. (GIGIL won bronze for its advertising campaign "Party" for Cheers, a local party supplies brand)
	HR 178	Rep. Olaso	Commending Mr. Adonis Castillo Asid, the sole Zamboangueño in the Philippine Team which represented the Philippines in the 2022 World Championships of Performing Arts, for winning the gold medal in both Latin and Opera Categories, silver medal in the Original Category, and for bagging four special awards in the World Division Category of the said competition	The Committee adopted HR 178 and approved the corresponding Committee Report. Rep. Khymer Adan Olaso (1 st District, Zamboanga City), author of HR 178, said that his resolution not only recognizes Mr. Asid for winning medals and special awards in the 2022 World Championships of Performing Arts, but his measure also serves to motivate budding artists in their chosen field.

Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	Substitute Bill to HBs 41, 121, 133, 333, 398, 432, 480, 504, 515, 937, 949, 995, 1035, 1110, 1138, 1254, 1367, 1696, 1840, 1932, 1961, 2057, 2071, 2185, 2235, 2240, 2476, 2494, 2576, 2932, 2984, 2985, 2986, 3310, 3324, 3384, 3426 & 3427	Reps. Daza, Ferrer (J.M.), Del Mar, Romero, Tambunting, Pimentel, Senior Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Yap (Edvic), Revilla (R.J.), Gomez, Vargas, Villafuerte (L.R.), Matugas, Rillo, Dy (F.), Ouano-Dizon, Almario, Olivarez, Salo, Go (M.), Marañon, Ortega, Cojuangco (J.), Deputy Speaker Recto, Reps. Yap (C.), Asistio, Noel, Collantes, Robes, Lara, Deputy Speaker Gonzales, Reps. Pleyto, Dayanghirang, Tallado, Khonghun, Hataman, Dimaporo (S.A.), and Dimaporo (M.K.)	Postponing the December 2022 barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, amending for the purpose RA 9164, as amended by RAs 9340, 10632, 10656, 10923, 10952, and 11462	The Committee, chaired by Mountain Province Rep. Maximo Dalog Jr., approved the Substitute Bill to the 38 bills subject to style. Thereafter, the corresponding Committee Report was also approved.
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Creative Industry and Performing Arts (Special Committee)	Briefing by concerned government agencies on the following: creative economy; Republic Act 11904, otherwise known as the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR); UNESCO Creative Cities Network; and Philippine Creative Cities Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of the country's creative economy 	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4 th District, Pangasinan), listened to the presentation of concerned government agencies on the following: creative economy; Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (RA 11904) and its IRR; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network; and the Philippine Creative Cities Network. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Rafaelita Aldaba presented the economic performance of the Philippine creative industries. She reported that in 2021, creative goods and services accounted for 6.57% of the country's total exports. Also, 11.6% of the country's total employment came from the creative sector which consists of those from the informal sector and freelancers. Aldaba recognizes the strengths and opportunities in the sector, such as adapting new technology, enabling global presence, promoting content innovation, generating employment, and promoting growth of the Filipino culture and arts. But she also pointed out its weaknesses and threats which include high cost of production, limited innovation, issues in ease of doing business,

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Creative Industry and
Performing Arts
(Special Committee)

- Implementation of the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (PCIDA) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)

lack or limited original content, counterfeiting, piracy, and lack of industry data.

On the implementation of Republic Act No. 11904 or the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act, Aldaba said this will pave the way for the economic transformation, growth and development of the creative sector. She enumerated the nine domains of the creative industries as stipulated in the law, as follows:

- Audiovisual Media
- Digital Interactive Media
- Creative Services
- Design
- Publishing and Printed Media
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Traditional Cultural Expressions
- Cultural Sites

In addition, she mentioned that the law establishes the Philippine Creative Industries Development Council. The Council shall be responsible for coordinating, aligning and synergizing its plans and programs with the National Cultural Policy Plan, as well as those formulated by national government agencies that have existing mandates in culture and the arts. Likewise, it will be responsible for determining other components under the Creative Industries Development Plan, according to Aldaba.

Regarding the law's IRR, Aldaba presented the timeline to be observed by the DTI-Competitiveness and Innovation Group (CIG) in crafting the said IRR. Based on the timeline, the Undersecretary said the DTI-CIG should be able to present the final draft of the IRR to the DTI Secretary within the first week of October. By October 18, she said the DTI Secretary, in consultation with other government agencies, industry representatives, and non-government organizations, shall then promulgate the said IRR for the effective implementation of RA 11904. Aldaba then briefly presented the current draft outline of the subject IRR.

In reply to the query of Rep. Jose Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) on the status of creating a road map for each subsector of the creative industry, Aldaba replied that last year the DTI has already come up with road maps for the following subsectors: game development, software development, digital animation, radio, TV and printed media, and digital advertising. This year, she said the DTI is working with industry groups and other concerned government agencies in ensuring the implementation of these road maps. Further, she apprised the body that the DTI intends to create the road maps of the following sectors this year: jewelry, furniture, textile, architecture, fashion design, and film. However, she explained that this will only push through if the Department of Budget and Management will provide the budget of P40 million that is intended for this purpose.

Rep. De Venecia stressed that there should be a standard framework in creating these roadmaps for uniformity, considering that other agencies also have their own road mapping initiatives. Aldaba responded that the DTI is already remedying this by coordinating and sharing their information with other agencies and their respective researchers.

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

Department of Foreign Affairs - UNESCO National Commission (UNACOM) of the Philippines Deputy Executive Director Lindsay Barrientos presented the significance of becoming part of the UCCN and its admission requirements. She said the objective of the UCCN

<p><i>Continuation...</i></p> <p>Creative Industry and Performing Arts (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippine Creative Cities Network (PCCN) 	<p>is to boost the economic growth of cities through partnerships with cultural and creative industries.</p> <p>The UCCN was created in 2004 to promote and strengthen cooperation among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The 246 cities from different countries, which currently make up this network, work together towards a common objective of placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level. (Source: UNESCO website)</p> <p>Barrientos also reported that currently, the UCCN covers seven creative fields: Music, Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Media Arts, Gastronomy, Film, and Literature. She also informed the body that applications for membership are held every two years through the UNACOM. As of 2021, she said there are 49 cities that were added to the 246 cities and that only two cities came from the Philippines. These are the UNESCO Creative City of Design in Cebu and Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art in Baguio City.</p> <p>Representing the UNESCO Creative City of Design in Cebu, Butch Carungay, the private sector head for the Creative Cebu Grid, reported that as of November 9, 2021, there are 28 cities that have signed the PCCN Creative Manifesto. The PCCN aims to institutionalize the creative agenda at all levels of policy formulation and decision making so that the creative industries are allocated the appropriate resources and support to be widely acknowledged as among the Top 3 industries in the Philippines by 2026, Carungay said.</p> <p>In a video presentation, Innovation and Creative Entrepreneurship Program Manager Kat Mallillin of Thames International Business School discussed the UCCN and the Philippine Creative Cities Playbook. The playbook, she said, was developed to promote and support aspiring local cities in their applications to join the UCCN. Further, she said that the playbook will provide a heat map of cultural domains in the cities. She recommended that even those cities that will not apply should still jump start their creative/cultural mapping so that they can already assess what they can contribute should they decide to apply later on.</p>
<p>Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICCP)</p>	<p>Briefing by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) on its proposed budget for 2023, strategic master plan framework, plans and programs, and accomplishments</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Kalinga Rep. Allen Jesse Mangaoang, listened to the briefing conducted by the NCIP on its proposed budget for FY 2023, strategic master plan framework, accomplishments, and plans and programs.</p> <p>NCIP Chair Allen Capuyan reported that the proposed 2023 budget of NCIP is set at P1.468 billion. By expense class, the proposed budget will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS) P866.11 million; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P428.10 million; capital outlay (CO), P98.42 million; and retirement and life insurance premium (RLIP), P76.15 million.</p> <p>The NCIP's strategic direction for 2023, Capuyan added, is aligned with the current administration's priorities, such as food security, climate change adaptation, economic recovery, improved health care and education, enhanced infrastructure projects, utilization of renewable energy sources, strengthened tourism, jobs creation, and sustainable development.</p> <p>Dr. George Rabusa of the NCIP mentioned that its MOOE has been decreasing through the years since 2016. He promised to submit to</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i></p> <p>Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICCP)</p>	<p>the Committee a more detailed breakdown of its 2023 budget in time for Congress' budget deliberations in September.</p> <p>Capuyan also apprised the Committee of the NCIP's Strategic Master Plan Framework for 2022-2028 which serves as the rights-based approach roadmap of the Commission for the next six years. According to Capuyan, the Strategic Master Plan is crafted to ensure the timely delivery of outputs and outcomes by the NCIP which are aimed at strengthening and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples and securing their ancestral domain.</p> <p>The NCIP was requested to provide the Committee with a copy of its Strategic Master Plan Framework for 2022-2028.</p> <p>The NCIP Chair proceeded to discuss the Commission's shared programs, namely: Ancestral Domain/Land Security Program; Human, Socio-Economic Development and Protection Program; and IPs Rights Protection Program.</p> <p>Another accomplishment of the Commission, according to Capuyan, is the NCIP's strategic communication system which generates timely reports on violations of IPs' rights and other incidents involving them, coupled with the issuance of press releases and other relevant information. He added that the NCIP advocates whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach to better respond to and address injustices and issues affecting the ICCs and IPs.</p> <p>The NCIP was requested to furnish the Committee with a copy of its presentation.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Briefing by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and its attached agencies on current issues and concerns in the transportation sector</p> <p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), listened to the DOTr and its attached agencies relative to issues and concerns affecting the transportation sector.</p> <p>DOTr Undersecretary for Planning and Project Development Timothy John Batan discussed specific issues and concerns affecting the aviation, maritime, rail, and road sectors. For the aviation sector, he cited the low adoption of airport technology; conflicting functions of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) in regulating and operating aerodrome; lack of a back-up system for air navigation; and the need to amend the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Build-Operate-and-Transfer Law.</p> <p>In the rail sector, Batan raised concern over the budget allocation shortfall for foreign-assisted projects, as well as issues relating to right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, utility relocation (particularly for high voltage transmission lines), and the lack of funding for feasibility studies for new rail projects.</p> <p>Regarding the issues and concerns of the road sector, Batan said the Land Transportation Office (LTO) identified challenges in the following projects: information technology infrastructure project; establishing additional Drivers Education Centers; operationalizing additional Private Motor Vehicle Inspection Centers; and the production and issuance of vehicle license plates for two-wheeled vehicles.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Batan reported that despite the various projects of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to upgrade its systems and improve its services, the LTFRB continues to have issues on manpower, technical expertise, and capacities of existing personnel, as well as budgetary and technical issues particularly in LTFRB's Electronic Support System. He also cited several concerns in the implementation of the Central Public Utility</p>

Continuation...
Transportation

Vehicle Monitoring System, which ultimately aims to collect data on the number of public utility vehicles (PUVs) that are operating per route in order to balance the supply and demand of PUVs in that area.

For the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), one of the top issues that need to be addressed, according to Batan, is the pending transfer of the ROW acquisition from the Department of Public Works and Highways to the TRB. He added that the TRB also raised concerns over pending petitions for toll rate adjustments and full implementation of the Electronic Toll Collection Interoperability Project covering Phases 1, 2 and 3 which would allow the public to just maintain one RFID (radio frequency identification) sticker for all toll expressways.

As for the maritime sector, Batan enumerated the respective issues and concerns of the different agencies involved in the maritime sector, as follows:

- Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) – high transport and logistics costs that would need the reduction of the following fees: port terminal management regulatory fees, short reception fees, PPA accreditation and permits, mandatory pilotage fees, and container/cargo handling tariff;
- Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) – poor quality of sea transport system; low level of shipbuilding and repair productivity; unattractive Philippine ship registry; and competence issues among Filipino seafarers;
- Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) – issues in the implementation of certain PCG projects on climate change and maritime safety and issues relating to personnel benefits and procurement which will require the amendment of the PCG law and crafting of a PCG modernization law;
- Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) – high turnover rate of faculty and staff; delay in the transfer/provision of land title to PMMA for its present location in Narciso, Zambales; and the need for additional funding to establish a new campus in Cagayan de Oro City; and acquire full mission ship handling simulator (integrated with bridge and engine room) to prepare students for real life situations.

Rep. Ramon Rodrigo Gutierrez (Party-List, 1-RIDER) noted the inconsistencies in the implementation of the ‘no-contact’ apprehension policy in Metro Manila. DOTr Undersecretary for Road Transport and Infrastructure Mark Steven Pastor said the Department already formed a technical working group in coordination with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the local government units (LGUs) to further discuss how to address this concern.

Rep. Acop pointed out that most of the issues and concerns identified by the DOTr have implications on the budget. He asked whether the Department has tried to submit these for funding under the 2023 National Expenditure Program (NEP).

DOTr Secretary Jaime Bautista replied yes, but he said the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) was not able to accommodate most of the aforementioned projects. Rep. Acop surmised that this could be due to the reported low absorptive capacities of the DOTr and its attached agencies.

DOTr Undersecretary for Administration and Finance Kim Robert De Leon mentioned that the Department is expecting higher budget

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Transportation</p>	<p>utilization rate as both its obligation and disbursement rates have significantly improved in the past year.</p> <p>On the query of several Members whether the <i>libreng sakay</i> program will continue its operation next year, Pastor informed the body that the proposed P12 billion funding for the continued implementation of the program in 2023 has not been included in the 2023 NEP. Moreover, he explained that the P7 billion budget of the program for 2022 will already be fully utilized by the end of August. However, he disclosed that an additional budget of P1.4 billion to continue the program this year was already granted by the DBM.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Acop to comment on reports that some drivers participating in the <i>libreng sakay</i> program are not receiving their remunerations, Pastor elucidated that the contract for the <i>libreng sakay</i> program is between the LTFRB and the bus operator. He said the LTFRB has already settled its obligations with the operators and that it is the operators' responsibility to ensure that the wages of participating drivers are paid. Nonetheless, he assured the Committee that drivers who reported non-payment of wages will be assisted in settling their concerns with the proper labor agencies.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Acop and Rep. Estrella inquired how LTO is going to address the backlog in the production of vehicle license plates which is at 8.12 million as per the 2020 Commission on Audit Report.</p> <p>LTO Assistant Secretary Teofilo Guadiz III responded that the LTO has already cleared its backlog for four-wheeled vehicles. He said as long as dealers submit the required documents to LTO, the plates can be released within five to seven days. He clarified that the backlog in the production of license plates for two-wheeled vehicles purchased from 2016 to 2018 is what the LTO is trying to clear at the moment. He added that by LTO's estimate, this backlog will be cleared by the first quarter of 2023.</p> <p>For his part, ABONO Party-List Rep. Robert Raymund Estrella appealed to the DOTr to allot manpower and funding for the conduct of feasibility studies for railway projects that would connect the provinces of La Union, Nueva Vizcaya, and Pagudpud in Ilocos Norte to Metro Manila. He emphasized that this would allow easier transport of agricultural products which could lead to the lowering the prices of food commodities in the market.</p> <p>In connection with the <i>Buwan ng Wika</i> being celebrated this August, Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) suggested the use of local languages and dialects in airport signages. Batan took note of the suggestion and said that DOTr will coordinate with the Department of Tourism on the matter.</p> <p>Other Members raised issues and concerns affecting their respective districts which were responded to by the officials from the DOTr and its attached agencies.</p>
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