

Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY
Cotabato City

BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY
PARLIAMENT
(Second Regular Session)

Journal No. 45
November 25-26, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

At 1:51 P.M., Hon. Speaker Ali Pangalian M. Balindong called the session to order.

INVOCATION

Upon request of the Chair, Hon. MP Ibrahim D. Ali led the invocation.

SINGING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AND THE BANGSAMORO HYMN

Thereafter, the singing of the National Anthem and the Bangsamoro Hymn followed.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretariat called the Roll and the following Members of the BTA Parliament were physically present:

1. Hon. Faiz S. Alauddin
2. Hon. Ibrahim D. Ali
3. Hon. Lanang T. Ali, Jr.
4. Hon. Suharto M. Ambolodto
5. Hon. Baintan A. Ampatuan
6. Hon. Muslima A. Asmawil
7. Hon. Ali Pangalian M. Balindong
8. Hon. Anna Tarhata S. Basman
9. Hon. Hadji Abduladzis M. Esmael
10. Hon. Raissa H. Jajurie
11. Hon. Jose I. Lorena
12. Hon. Marjanie S. Macasalong
13. Hon. Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu
14. Hon. Amilbahar S. Mawallil
15. Hon. Datu Midpantao M. Midtimbang
16. Hon. Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr.
17. Hon. Suwaib L. Oranon
18. Hon. Abdulwahab M. Pak
19. Hon. Edrieza N.H. Rimbang
20. Hon. Said Z. Salendab
21. Hon. Romeo C. Saliga
22. Hon. Punduma B. Sani
23. Hon. Omar Yasser C. Sema

24. Hon. Romeo K. Sema
25. Hon. Aida M. Silongan
26. Hon. Ali B. Solaiman
27. Hon. Paisalin P. Tago

The following Members of the BTA Parliament were virtually present:

1. Hon. Akmad I. Abas
2. Hon. Haron M. Abas
3. Hon. Zul Qarneyn M. Abas
4. Hon. Basit S. Abbas
5. Hon. Mudjib C. Abu
6. Hon. Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong
7. Hon. Laisa M. Alamia
8. Hon. Eddie M. Alih
9. Hon. Zesar H. Alil
10. Hon. Hamid Aminoddin D. Barra
11. Hon. Mohammad Zainoden P. Bato
12. Hon. Abraham T. Burahan
13. Hon. Bai Maleiha B. Candao
14. Hon. Musa K.S. Diamlá
15. Hon. Saffrullah M. Dipatuan
16. Hon. Abdullah E. Gayak
17. Hon. Abdullah B. Hashim
18. Hon. Rasul E. Ismael
19. Hon. Maisara D. Latiph
20. Hon. Mussolini S. Lidasan
21. Hon. Don Mustapha A. Loong
22. Hon. Abdulraof A. Macacua
23. Hon. Jamel D. Macaraya
24. Hon. Malik A. Mantawil
25. Hon. Sittie Shahara I. Mastura
26. Hon. Abdulmuhmin A. Mujahid
27. Hon. Hussein P. Muñoz
28. Hon. Nabila Margarita P. Pangandaman
29. Hon. Diamila D. Ramos
30. Hon. Modayao M. Sacar
31. Hon. Al-Syed A. Sali
32. Hon. Ali O. Salik
33. Hon. Alzad T. Sattar
34. Hon. Said M. Sheik
35. Hon. Nabil A. Tan
36. Hon. Melanio U. Ulama
37. Hon. Mohammad S. Yacob

The Member of the Parliament who was on official business:

1. Hon. Ahod B. Ebrahim

The Members of the BTA Parliament who were noted absent:

1. Hon. Abdulla A. Ahang
2. Hon. Susana S. Anayatin
3. Hon. Eduard U. Guerra
4. Hon. Hatimil E. Hassan
5. Hon. Mohagher M. Iqbal
6. Hon. Muslimin A. Jakilan

7. Hon. Bainon G. Karon
8. Hon. Abdullah G. Macapaar
9. Hon. Datu Tucao O. Mastura
10. Hon. Ubaida C. Pacasem
11. Hon. Abdul R. Sahrin
12. Hon. Ali B. Sangki
13. Hon. Sahie S. Udjah
14. Hon. Adzfar H. Usman
15. Hon. Narciso C. Yu Ekey

With sixty-four (64) Members of the BTA Parliament, physically and virtually present, including the Speaker, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION

Thereafter, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr., duly seconded and there being no objection, the reading of the journal of the previous session, Journal No. 31 dated February 19, 2020, was dispensed with and the same was approved subject to style.

READING AND REFERRAL OF PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS TO COMMITTEES

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary-General, Prof. Raby B. Angkal, read the titles of the following proposed resolutions successively which were, in turn, on separate motions of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, referred to the appropriate committees, viz:

1. Proposed Resolution No. 273, entitled:

RESOLUTION OPERATIONALIZING BARTER TRADE IN THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION, ADOPTING IN PARTS SOME PROVISIONS OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 64 SERIES OF 2018, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE REVIVAL OF BARTER IN MINDANAO AND OTHER PERTINENT LAWS, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE, AN AD HOC COMMITTEE TO AMEND, MODIFY, REVISE AND REVIEW SOME PERTINENT PROVISIONS THEREOF, PURSUANT TO SECTION 26 OF ARTICLE XIII AND SECTION 2 (e), ARTICLE V OF R.A. 11054, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BANGSAMORO ORGANIC LAW, AND SECTION 8 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 64

Authors: Hon. MPs Mudjib C. Abu and Abdullah A. Ahang
To the Committee on Trade, Investment and Tourism

2. Proposed Resolution No. 274, entitled:

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF HALAL BUSINESS COUNCIL-MINDANAO (HBC-MIN) AS STRATEGIC PARTNER AND CORPORATE ARM OF THE MINISTRY OF

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND AGRARIAN REFORM
AND/OR MINISTRY OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM
ON HALAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

Author: Hon. MP Ali B. Sangki
Co-authors: Hon. MPs Mudjib C. Abu and Abdulla A. Ahang
To the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform and the
Committee on Trade, Investment and Tourism

3. Proposed Resolution No. 295, entitled:

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND AGRARIAN REFORM (MAFAR) TO ADOPT
PROGRAMS THAT WILL ESTABLISH A LINK BETWEEN THE
FARMERS AND PURCHASERS WITH THE END VIEW OF
IMPROVING THE FORMER'S SALES

Author: Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph
To the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform

4. Proposed Resolution No. 296, entitled:

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE MINISTRY OF BASIC, HIGHER
AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (MBHTE) TO INCLUDE ITS
PROGRAMS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(SPED) CENTERS FOR CHILDREN WHO NEEDS SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Author: Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph
To the Committee on Basic, Higher and Technical Education

5. Proposed Resolution No. 322, entitled:

RESOLUTION CALLING THE BANGSAMORO GOVERNMENT TO
PROVIDE ASSISTANCE THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS
IN BARMM TO SUPPORT THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING
MODALITY AND THE NECESSARY MATERIALS USED AS
TOOL OF LEARNING IN THIS HEALTH CRISIS

Author: Hon. MP Edrieza H.N. Rimbang
To the Committee on Basic, Higher and Technical Education

6. Proposed Resolution No. 336, entitled:

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND AGRARIAN REFORM (MAFAR) TO COME UP
WITH APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS TO INCREASE
PRODUCTIVITY AND ENSURE THE INCOME OF CORN
FARMERS WITHIN BARMM

Author: Hon. MP Romeo C. Saliga
To the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform

TREATMENT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS AS SIMPLE RESOLUTIONS AND BEING TRANSFER TO THE BUSINESS FOR THE DAY

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary-General read the titles of the following PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS which were, in turn, on separate motions of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, treated by the body as simple resolutions and transferred to the Business for the Day, *viz*:

1. Proposed Resolution No. 288, entitled:

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE TOP RANKED BANGSAMORO QUR'AN RECITERS WHO REPRESENTED THE COUNTRY IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL QUR'AN RECITING COMPETITIONS FOR AROUND HALF A CENTURY SINCE 1969

Author: Hon. MP Eddie M. Alih

Co-authors: Hon. MPs Ziaur-Rahman A. Adiong, Nabil A. Tan, Abdul R. Sahrin, Abdulraof A. Macacua, Laisa M. Alamia, Diamila D. Ramos, Maisara D. Latiph, Nabila Margarita P. Pangandaman, Mudjib C. Abu, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Ali D. Ibrahim, Al-Syed A. Sali, Adzfar H. Usman, Abraham T. Burahan, Alzad T. Sattar, Sahie S. Udjah, Abdulmuhmin A. Mujahid, and Deputy Speaker Hatimil E. Hassan,

2. Proposed Resolution No. 305, entitled:

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES (USTP) FOR TEMPORARILY ACCOMODATING THE BANGSAMORO LSI BOUND FOR BASILAN, SULU, AND TAWI-TAWI LAST JULY 7, 2020

Authors: Hon. MPs Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong, Ali Pangalian M. Balindong, Hatimil E. Hassan, Raissa H. Jajurie, Abdulraof A. Macacua, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Lanang T. Ali, Jr., Eddie M. Alih, Aida M. Silongan, Nabil A. Tan, Jose I. Lorena, Anna Tarhata S. Basman, Laisa M. Alamia, Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr., Baintan A. Ampatuan, Don Mustapha A. Loong, Susana S. Anayatin, Mussolini S. Lidasan, Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu, Maisara D. Latiph, Nabila Margarita P. Pangandaman, Musa K.S. Diamlala, and Paisalin P. Tago

3. Proposed Resolution No. 310, entitled:

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF SAN JUAN FOR RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF BANGSAMORO LSI AND ROF WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION AND FACILITATING THEIR SAFE RETURN TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES

Author: Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong

Co-authors: Hon. MPs Susana S. Anayatin, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr. and Saffrullah M. Dipatuan

READING ON FIRST STAGE OF BILLS

Thereafter, upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary-General read the titles of the following bills on First Stage which were declared by the Majority Floor Leader as private bills, *viz*:

1. BTA-Parliament Bill No. 65, entitled:

AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS WHO ARE DECLARED CONFIRMED, SUSPECTED, PROBABLE, AND RECOVERED CASES OF COVID-19, INCLUDING HEALTH WORKERS, OTHER FRONTLINERS, SERVICE WORKERS, REPATRIATED OFWs, RETURNING OFWs AND LOCALLY STRANDED INDIVIDUALS (LSIs), AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Authors: Hon. MPs Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr., Sittie Shahara I. Mastura, Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong, Bai Maleiha B. Candao, Anna Tarhata S. Basman, Laisa M. Alamia, Suharto M. Ambolodto, Baintan A. Ampatuan, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Rasul E. Ismael, and Don Mustapha A. Loong

Co-authors: Hon. MPs Musa K.S. Diamlala, Maisara D. Latiph, Punduma B. Sani, Mussolini S. Lidasan, Omar Yasser C. Sema, Narciso C. Yu Ekey, Romeo C. Saliga, Jamel D. Macaraya, Diamila D. Ramos, Jose I. Lorena, Nabil A. Tan, Ibrahim D. Ali, and Aida M. Silongan

2. BTA-Parliament Bill No. 66, entitled:

AN ACT ESTABLISHING OCCUPATIONALLY SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS TO ALL PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENT WITHIN THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Author: Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema

3. BTA-Parliament Bill No. 69, entitled:

AN ACT CREATING THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN'S CAUCUS IN THE BANGSAMORO PARLIAMENT PROVIDING FOR ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND COMPOSITION

Author: Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia

Co-authors: Hon. MPs Maisara D. Latiph, Bainon G. Karon, Baintan A. Ampatuan, Susana S. Anayatin, Nabila Margarita P. Pangandaman, Aida M. Silongan, Diamila D. Ramos, Sittie Shahara I. Mastura, Bai Maleiha B. Candao, Suharto M. Ambolodto, Rasul E. Ismael, Nabil A. Tan, Jose I. Lorena and Paisalin P. Tago

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 39

Subsequently, the body proceeded to consider Committee Report No. 39 as reported out by the Committee on Labor and Employment, thru the Committee

Chairperson, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema, re: Deliberation on recommitted BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, entitled:

AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE POLICIES FOR BANGSAMORO OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT AND ESTABLISHING A STANDARD OF PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE OVERSEAS BANGSAMORO WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Author: Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema

Co-Authors: Hon. MPs Hatimil E. Hassan, Abdul R. Sahrin, Jose I. Lorena, Adzfar H. Usman, Muslimin A. Jakilan, Abdulmuhmin A. Mujahid, Sahie S. Udjah, Omar Yasser C. Sema, Bainon G. Karon, Punduma B. Sani, Alzad T. Sattar, Suharto M. Ambolodto, Paisalin P. Tago, Aida M. Silongan, Zesar H. Alil, Susana S. Anayatin, Sittie Shahara I. Mastura, Faiz S. Alauddin, Maisara D. Latiph, Mohagher M. Iqbal, Abdulla A. Ahang, Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu, Malik A. Mantawil, Bai Maleiha B. Candao, Musa K.S. Diamla, Ubaida C. Pacasem, Haron M. Abas, Ali O. Salik, Hadji Abduladzis M. Esmael, Hussein P. Muñoz, Nabila Margarita P. Pangandaman, Melanio U. Ulama, Marjanie S. Macasalong, Datu Tucao O. Mastura, Abdullah E. Gayak, Diamila D. Ramos, Datu Midpantao M. Midtimbang, Jamel D. Macaraya, Narciso C. Yu Ekey, Said M. Sheik, Rasul E. Ismael, Eduard U. Guerra, Ibrahim D. Ali, Abraham T. Burahan, Ali Pangalian M. Balindong, Abdulwahab M. Pak, Modayao M. Sacar, Abdulraof A. Macacua, Lanang T. Ali, Jr., Laisa M. Alamia, Anna Tarhata S. Basman, Don Mustapha A. Loong, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Baintan A. Ampatuan, Eddie M. Alih, Mussolini S. Lidasan, Suwaib L. Oranon and Abdullah E. Gayak

With the recommendation that said BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 be approved with amendments.

ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 39

Thereafter, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, Committee Report No. 39 was adopted.

OPENING OF THE PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

Subsequently, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation was opened.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 2:32 P.M., the Chair, *motu proprio* declared a one-minute suspension.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:37 P.M., the session resumed.

QUERY OF THE CHAIR

Thereupon, the Chair inquired from the Majority Floor Leader if what was the parliamentary status of the bill.

RESPONSE OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

In response to the query of the Chair, the Majority Floor Leader stated that BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 had been reported to the plenary by the Committee on Labor and Employment. However, during the discussion in the period of debate and interpellation, it was recommitted for further public consultation with the concerned agencies of the National Government. He informed the body that the parliamentary status of the bill was supposedly in the period of amendments and that the Committee Report was to inform the august body of the result of the public consultation. He said that as reported by Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema, the national government agencies had been invited but they were not able to attend the public consultation conducted by the Committee on Labor and Employment. In view thereof, the Majority Floor Leader said that they would proceed to the period of amendments.

FURTHER QUERY OF THE CHAIR

Whereupon, the Chair inquired from Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema if the invitations were properly sent to the concerned national government agencies.

RESPONSE OF HON. MP ROMEO K. SEMA

Whereupon, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded affirmatively to the query of the Chair. He stated that a representative of the DOJ confirmed his attendance but was not able to attend the committee hearing, saying that it was the reason why the Committee was not able to discuss the provision on penalties under Article VI of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36. He, however, stressed that under Article VI of the Bill, it is clear that it is not the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) that prosecutes the case, it only assists the DOJ in the prosecution of the case.

CLOSING OF THE PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation was closed.

OPENING OF THE PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

Thereafter, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of amendments for BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 was opened.

QUERY OF HON. MP ZIAUR-RAHMAN ALONTO ADIONG

When recognized, Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong said that there is indeed an alarming rate of abuses against Filipino workers abroad. He agreed with the proponent that the bill has a noble intention to protect the Overseas Bangsamoro Workers (OBW), especially those who are coming from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Then, he asked the proponent if BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 is supported by the Government of the Day as one of its priority legislations.

RESPONSE OF HON. MP ROMEO K. SEMA

Whereupon, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 was not presented to the Cabinet, explaining that during the time he filed the bill, each Member of the Parliament was allowed to submit a private bill. He apologized for not being able to consider that. He then stressed that as a Member of the Cabinet, he should have presented the bill to the Cabinet. He, however, emphasized that it is not against the Rules that a Member of the Parliament and a concurrent Member of the Cabinet may submit a private bill. He stressed that the bill is part of the 12-point priority agenda of the Chief Minister, particularly the priority agenda on the protection of workers and the promotion of employment. Thus, he highlighted that BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 is basically one of the major mandates of MOLE under the Republic Act 11054.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP ZIAUR-RAHMAN ALONTO ADIONG

Whereupon, Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong manifested that he asked the question because he presumed that since the proponent sits in the Cabinet, it would be appropriate for the proponent to relay the bill to the leadership of the Government of the Day. He further explained that it is because once the bill is enacted, it would necessitate allocation for funding and that it would be better if the Government of the Day categorically manifest its support by endorsing it as a cabinet bill.

POINT OF ORDER OF HON. MP NABIL A. TAN

At this juncture, Hon. MP Nabil A. Tan raised a point of order. He explained that although the period of interpellation on BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 was already terminated, the bill was recommitted for further clarification on the most important issues raised during the deliberation. He pointed out that it appears from the report of Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema that the DOJ and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) were not able to attend the committee hearing conducted by the Committee on Labor and Employment. Thus, he inquired from the proponent if the Committee submitted the issues that the Parliament would like to be clarified to the DOJ and DFA. Hon. MP Tan manifested that he joined the observation of Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong, asking why the bill was not made a cabinet bill of the Government of the Day, considering that, as mentioned by the author, the bill is necessary for the effective exercise of functions by MOLE. He also manifested that he supported the bill, since it has a noble intention, stating, however, that they might have a problem on the implementation of the provisions when the BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 becomes a law.

Hon. MP Nabil A. Tan also inquired about the status of the bill since it was recommitted and if the period of interpellation was re-opened and if it was limited to the issues that became the reasons for recommitting the said bill.

RESPONSE OF HON. MP ROMEO K. SEMA

As to the parliamentary status of the bill, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that it was already answered by the Majority Floor Leader and the period of interpellation on the bill had already been terminated.

CLARIFICATION OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Thereupon, the Majority Floor Leader, when recognized, clarified that what he said a while ago was that the Committee had sent notice or invitation to the DFA and the DOJ and other concerned government agencies to attend the public consultation to be conducted by the Committee on Labor and Employment, but the DFA and the DOJ did not appear or participate in the public consultation.

The Majority Floor Leader, however, commented that the question of Hon. MP Nabil A. Tan about the status of the bill under the Rules of the Parliament when the bill is recommitted for further consultation is a valid procedural question.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 2:55 P.M, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, the Chair declared a 15-minute suspension of session for *As 'r* prayer.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:28 P.M., the session resumed.

CLOSING OF PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of amendments was closed.

OPENING OF THE PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

Thereafter, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation was opened.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP JOSE I. LORENA

As to whether he was correct that the proponent had sent communications to the DFA, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and other concerned agencies, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded in the affirmative.

As to whether the proponent included in the communication some of the concerns of the Members of the Parliament when the bill was first brought to the plenary, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema gave an affirmative answer.

As to whether he was correct, that despite communication, none of the agencies appeared, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied affirmatively.

As to whether the Committee submitted or prepared some amendments to the original bill based on the concerns of the Members of the Parliament or whether there are new provisions incorporated by the Committee after the bill had been recommitted to the Committee on Labor and Employment, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied negatively. He explained that since the concerned agencies did not attend the committee hearing, they did not touch the issues and just leave it to the plenary in the period of amendments.

As to whether it is correct that one of their concerns is to post Bangsamoro Desks in the different consulate, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied affirmatively.

As to whether there was a mention that MOLE has no jurisdiction over the consulate where the Bangsamoro Desk are to be established, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded negatively, explaining that during the Technical Working Committee and the discussion of the transfer of the powers and functions, Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph asked Administrator Bernard P. Olalia of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) regarding the issue and the latter responded that what is doable is that instead of putting the Bangsamoro Desk in the embassy, they preferred to put the Bangsamoro Desk in the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO).

Whereupon, Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena explained that from his experience, they usually have welfare attaché in different offices in POLO, saying that the welfare attaché is paid by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. He concluded his interpellation by manifesting that he would submit proposed amendments in the period of amendments.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP KHADAFEH G. MANGUDADATU

Upon recognition of the Chair, Hon. MP Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu asked the proponent regarding Item No. 7, Article IX, Section 42 on the recommendations of the *Kaagapay* to establish an Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Help Desk in the places which are very far and not accessible to most of the OFWs. He pointed out that the committee report particularly mentions that *Kaagapay* is currently piloting Barangay Lamud and Looy in South Upi and Barangay Rempes in Upi for the establishment of Barangay Level OFW Help Desk and such establishment will be very beneficial for OFWs and families especially in island provinces. In view thereof, he asked the proponent to explain further the relevance of the Help Desk Centers located in the barangays in the Province of Maguindanao to the families of the OBWs, especially those in the island provinces, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that the specific areas mentioned are intended for the members of the Indigenous Communities because most of the members of the Indigenous Cultural Communities are accessing and coming

to the office of MOLE. He stated that he would be open, if Hon. MP Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu would want to expand or amend the particular provision in the period of amendments.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP BANTAN A. AMPATUAN

Upon recognition by the Chair, Hon. MP Baintan A. Ampatuan stated that upon reading and rereading the proposed bill, she noticed that there are so many actors with different names that were deleted in the bill. In view thereof, she inquired from the proponent about the specific distinctions of the following six subjects of the bill: 1.) Overseas Bangsamoro Workers, 2.) Bangsamoro Migrant Workers, 3.) Overseas Migrant Women, 4.) Overseas Bangsamoro, 5.) Overseas Bangsamoro Workers and their families, and 6.) Bangsamoro Overseas Filipino Workers. She stressed that she was confused as to what really is the particular subject of each section or provision of the proposed bill. She pointed out that in the definition of terms, only three subjects are incorporated and that the three other subjects are not captured by the definitions of terms. In view thereof, she asked if the proponent would accept later on the inclusion of the definitions of the other three items, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied affirmatively.

Thereupon, Hon. MP Baintan A. Ampatuan pointed out that on page 12 of Article V, lines 36 to 42, the bill says that *“There shall be sum of PhP 10 Million that will be established as an emergency repatriation fund under the administrative control and supervision of the Ministry of Labor and Employment which shall be charged against the block grant and will be incorporated in the Bangsamoro Expenditure Program.”* Then, she asked about the basis of putting PhP10 Million as the initial funding, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that the basis of the PhP 10 Million is that there are many OBW who have a problem and the National Government is having a hard time sending them back home. He explained that the PhP 10 Million repatriation fund is to augment the fund of OWWA.

As to how much is the annual repatriation fund of OWWA, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that he was not able to take the exact figure, explaining that although the budget of OWWA is subsidized for the administration, most of its fund is based on the

mandatory membership fee. He informed the body that they have requested OWWA that all the membership fee collected from the Overseas Workers from the Bangsamoro Region should be given to MOLE.

As to whether repatriation fund is coming from the budget of OWWA provided under the General Appropriations Act (GAA), Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that the fund of OWWA is from the membership fees of the OBWs and the subsidy for the personnel services and some administrative transaction of administration. He, however, emphasized that most of the fund of OWWA is from the membership fees of the OBWs.

CLARIFICATION OF THE CHAIR

At this point, the Chair clarified that the fund of OWWA comes from the workers and that technically there is no money that is being brought out from the coffin of the National Government, except the subsidy. He explained that part of the subsidy may be taken out for the assistance of OWWA.

CONTINUATION OF THE INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP BAIN TAN A. AMPATUAN

Subsequently, Hon. MP Baintan A. Ampatuan raised her concerned on Article VII, Section 28 of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, which talks about legal fund amounting to PhP5 Million, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that the real intention of the PhP5 Million, is for it to be a standby fund for legal assistance to the OBWs.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Baintan A. Ampatuan commented as to why only PhP5 Million, saying that it might not be enough. She added that if there is enough justification, they could double the amount.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP RAISSA H. JAJURIE

When recognized, Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie inquired from the proponent whether it would be the Bangsamoro Government, particularly MOLE that would have jurisdiction over legal actions if and when BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 is enacted into law, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied affirmatively. He explained that it is the reason why they have the Bangsamoro Attorney-General's Office that would facilitate all the legal actions against some institutions.

As to what office in the Bangsamoro Government can an aggrieved Overseas Bangsamoro Worker (OBW) go to if his/her right arising out of the proposed law is violated, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that it is the Repatriation Assistant Division under the Overseas Workers Bureau and also under the Bureau of Overseas Employment, there is a division that handles the complaints.

As to whether the offices mentioned by the proponent are part of MOLE, Hon. Romeo K. Sema gave an affirmative answer.

Thereupon, Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie cited that Section 3 of the bill which talks about the coverage of law says that “*This Act applies to all Overseas Bangsamoro Workers and Overseas Bangsamoro within or outside the Bangsamoro territory.*” Then, she inquired from the proponent if what is contemplated in the words “*outside the Bangsamoro territory*” in the said provision, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that the coverage of the proposed law is anchored on the provision that the Bangsamoro Government can assist the Bangsamoro outside the Bangsamoro territory. He added that during their courtesy meeting with Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Secretary Bello told them that they should have a satellite office in Manila because there are so many problems encountered by the Muslims in Metro Manila and nobody assists them. So, he stressed that it is a manifestation that the body needs to include in the coverage of the law outside the Bangsamoro territory.

As to whether the term “*outside Bangsamoro territory*” means to cover all provinces and cities in the Philippines, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied in the negative, explaining that the interpretation of “*outside the Bangsamoro territory*”, if they look at the Tripoli Agreement, the territory of the Bangsamoro people covers 13 provinces and 9 cities. He stated that although it is not included in RA 11054, they are still part of the Bangsamoro struggle.

As to whether the term “*outside the Bangsamoro territory*” only covers the 13 provinces and 9 cities, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema answered that they would not specify the term “*outside the Bangsamoro territory*”.

Thereupon, Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie emphasized that since the Parliament has already enacted the Administrative Code, there is a structure provided for MOLE. Then, she asked if how many units, branches, or sub-offices would be placed in different provinces and cities within the Bangsamoro with respect to the works of the Bureau of Employment, Promotion and Welfare, the Overseas Welfare Bureau, and other offices that were mentioned, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that the approved structure in the Transition Plan is each bureau has three divisions and has satellite offices in Zamboanga City and Manila, and that the approved structure in the Administrative Code, MOLE has provincial offices in the provinces of Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and offices in Cotabato City and in the 63 barangays in North Cotabato.

As to whether the provincial offices and offices in the geographical units of BARMM can exercise the powers and mandates of the bureaus, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that their field offices can exercise all the functions of MOLE.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie pointed out that if the law would provide legal mandate, it would be mandatory for MOLE to take jurisdiction of cases involving violation of rights laid down by the law. In view thereof, she expressed apprehension that if they would say that all the OBWs would have to file their cases in the MOLE structure, it would actually burden the OBWs who are living, for example, in Cagayan Valley to go to the Satellite Office of MOLE in Metro Manila. She stressed that OBWs could rather just go to a structure of DOLE in the region which covers Cagayan Valley. Thus, she opined that they can include in the law a provision that says that MOLE, through its various units and sub-units like the bureaus mentioned, can extend assistance to Bangsamoro living outside the Bangsamoro territory, stating, however, that the resolution of the cases for violations of the rights of the OBWs lodged in the MOLE structure may put more burden to the OBWs rather than facilitate the redress of their issues.

In response thereto, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema stated that he really appreciated the statement and manifestation of Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie and that the latter could proposed amendments in the period of amendments.

CLARIFICATION OF THE CHAIR

At this point, the Chair clarified from Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie if her proposal has no conflict of jurisdiction between the prosecuting office from the National Government and from MOLE, to which Hon. MP Raissa H. Jajurie responded that if they go beyond the territorial jurisdiction and they already have structures exercising the powers, they would have a dialogue first with existing national structures because the Parliament would be carving out part of their structures geographically. She explained that her proposal is to take out the words “*outside the Bangsamoro territory*” and add a provision that says “*The Ministry of Labor and Employment as well as its different bureaus shall extend assistance to the Bangsamoro residents or the Bangsamoro who are residing outside the Bangsamoro territory*”. She, however, emphasized that it is not a mandatory jurisdiction.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP SUHARTO M. AMBOLODITO

With respect to the execution of repatriation as provided by law, Hon. MP Suharto M. Ambolodto inquired from the proponent as to whether they are supposed to go to the concerned country and repatriate their people, or they are supposed to fund transfer resources to the Satellite Office in Manila and relate with the concerned embassies, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that they could not transfer the fund to their Satellite Office because it has no fiscal autonomy. He, however, stressed that MOLE could facilitate the resolution if there would be problems.

As to whether MOLE would be the one to perform the repatriation operation itself, or would simply relate with OWWA national and ask their assistance in conducting the repatriation, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied in the negative. He explained that as a matter of protocol experiences, if there are problems, MOLE only coordinates with OWWA because it is very clear that under RA 11054, the Bangsamoro Government has no power in terms of foreign relations.

As to whether the Bangsamoro Government has the capacity to design and implement program on mental health, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded affirmatively.

He explained that they have the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD).

As to whether the compulsory insurance coverage under Section 45 of the bill is a restatement of current policy or requirement or an additional requirement, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that it is a restatement of the national policy.

As whether Section 46 is not a rider and how it is germane to the title and the purpose of the law, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that upon approval of the bill, it would be the basis for the Overseas Bangsamoro Workers' Day.

Hon. MP Suharto S. Ambolodto concluded his interpellation by saying that every provision of the law should be germane and pertinent to the title thereof.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 4:27 P.M., the Chair *motu proprio* declared a one-minute suspension of session.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:29 P.M., the session resumed.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP ZIAUR-RAHMAN ALONTO ADIONG

When recognized, Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong prefaced his interpellation by saying that part of the intention of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 is not only to protect the OBWs but also to ascertain the proper management of the Help Desk that would be set up in the consular offices of the Philippine embassies across the world. In view thereof, he inquired from the proponent about the arrangement of the budgeting and whether the proponent would agree that locally sponsored bill should also be locally funded, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that during their Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting, it was agreed upon that the Overseas Bangsamoro Help Desk would be put up in POLO. He stressed that as regards to the funding, they were able to discuss the administrative expenses and how the POEA and BARMM would be helping each other in POLO.

As to whether it would be BARMM which would hire the employees to be deployed in the consulate or it would be the POEA or the DFA that would hire the employees that would man the Bangsamoro Help Desk, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema

answered that under the bill, it is the Chief Minister who would appoint the personnel of the Bangsamoro Help Desk.

As to whether the proponent has contemplated the actual number of personnel that would be deployed in the Bangsamoro Help Desk, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that under the bill, they can start with one personnel who would assist POLO in overseeing the OBWs from the Bangsamoro region.

As to whether there is an arrangement that national agencies have counterpart in the administrative cost for the maintenance of the Bangsamoro Help Desk, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema gave a negative answer, stressing, however that it is in the agenda of their next meeting with the concerned national agencies.

Thereupon, Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong stated that his impression is that for the effectivity of the Bangsamoro Help Desk, its budget would not only be charged against the Bangsamoro Appropriations Act, but it would also have an impact on the administrative processes of the agencies of the consulates across the country. Thus, he stated that it is imperative that they consult the concerned national agencies in order to sort out the arrangements that they would need to put in place.

As to whether the proponent has contemplated on managing data, saying that it is also important to determine the number of Overseas Bangsamoro Worker outside the country, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that during their TWG meeting, they discussed about the data and they agreed to have a memorandum of agreement on data sharing because there is a protocol that the data cannot be shared without an agreement.

As to whether the data sharing agreement has been made part of the bill, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied negatively.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong manifested that he would still argue and insist that it is imperative to have clear understanding with the concerned national agencies that would be directly affected once the body enacts BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 into law such as the DOJ, the DFA, the POEA, and OWWA. He emphasized that even it is a regional law, ultimately, its impact would still change how the consulates would go on with their processes or the policies in protecting the Filipino Overseas

Workers because as far as the national agencies are concerned, the OBWs would still be considered as Filipino Overseas Workers.

Hon. MP Ziaur-Rahman Alonto Adiong concluded his interpellation by expressing his support to the intention of BTA-Bill No. 36.

INTERPELLATION OF THE MINORITY FLOOR LEADER

When recognized, the Minority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia, called the attention of the proponent to Section 3 of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 which defines illegal recruitment and provides for all the offenses that are penalized under the bill, including the elements thereof. Then, she inquired if the penalties imposed are similar to what are found in the national law, particularly the penalties under RA 8042 as amended, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied in the affirmative. He explained that the mandates of MOLE and DOLE are encoered on the Labor Code of the Philippines. He added that considering that the Bangsamoro Government has no Bangsamoro Labor Code yet, the implementation of labor laws shall be uniformed.

Subsequently, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia stated that in case someone violates this law within BARMM and found guilty of illegal recruitment, which laws should the regular court use to prosecute the case, the national law or the regional law. Thus, she proposed that, in order to avoid such situation and if the proponent would agree, if the penal provisions are the same with the penalties under RA 8032, as amended, the penal provisions of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 would be better if it is worded in such a way that there is an expressed reference to the national law by expressly providing in the particular bill that amendment on the national law should automatically amend the proposed regional law. Thus, she manifested that she would propose amendment later in order to couch the penal provisions of the bill in a language that is not going against the national penal laws.

In response thereto, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema stated that he fully agreed to the proposed amendment of the Minority Floor Leader in the period of amendments.

COMMENT OF THE CHAIR

At this juncture, the Chair commented that they should also look at the limitation of the power of the Parliament in crafting penal laws under RA 11054. He stressed that they should also look at the concepts of *mala in se* and *mala prohibita*. He emphasized that they can treat laws as ordinances thus they can be governed by the principle of *mala prohibita* so that their laws can operate on their own, notwithstanding the presence of national laws.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP LAISA M. ALAMIA

Thereafter, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia agreed with the Chair, saying that when they craft a penal law at the regional level, they should take into considerations the limits of the penalties that the Parliament can provide. Thus, she reiterated that would be recommending some amendments to the particular provision, so that later on, the DOJ would be able to clearly establish the elements of the crimes that have been committed and the courts would be able to clearly issue the judgment that would penalize the accused.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP DON MUSTAPHA A. LOONG

When recognized, Hon. MP Don Mustapha A. Loong asked the proponent if the recruitment agency which is already registered at the national agency would still be required to make an additional registration with MOLE, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that it is under the Recruitment Agency of 2020 that those recruitment agencies, both local and international, should be registered with MOLE. He, however, stressed that those recruitment agencies already registered with DOLE or the POEA are not required to register with the MOLE but they would need to be accredited only to MOLE through the Bureau of Overseas Employment and promotion before they can cooperate in the Bangsamoro region. He added that the new recruitment agencies from the Bangsamoro region are required to be registered in MOLE.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Don Mustapha A. Loong inquired from the proponent that if BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 would be passed into law, it would not deprive the OBWs access to the National Government's programs like the national programs by OWWA for

COVID: *Balik Probinsya, OFW Kalinga, Hatid-Sundo*, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that under the miscellaneous provisions of the bill, particularly on Section 47 which provides for the reservation of rights and benefits of the OBWs that are granted under RA No. 8042 as amended, other laws, orders, and rules and regulations on the migrant workers.

Subsequently, Hon. MP Don Mustapha A. Loong cited the Prohibition on Officials and Employees under Section 34 of the bill which states that *“It is unlawful for any official or employee of the Ministry of Labor and Employment or other Bangsamoro Government agencies involved in the implementation of this Act, or their relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, to engage directly or indirectly, in the business of recruiting migrant workers as defined in this Act.”* Then, he inquired if they could mention the agencies that are being referred as *“other Bangsamoro government agencies”*, to which Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema responded that the *“other Bangsamoro government agencies”* being referred to in Section 34 of the Bill are the MOH and the MSSD.

As to whether it would be possible to list down the other Bangsamoro government agencies in Section 34 of the bill, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema answered that Hon. MP Don Mustapha A. Loong could propose an amendment to the particular provision in the period of amendments.

As to whether the OBWs from the Bangsamoro communities outside the Bangsamoro Region are still considered part of the OBWs, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema gave an affirmative answer.

As regards the penal provisions of the bill, Hon. MP Don Mustapha A. Loong asked the proponent who has jurisdiction over the case that would be filed by the OBWs who are residing in Baguio or in Ilocos Norte, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema replied that with respect to the issue jurisdiction, he had already requested Deputy Majority Floor Leader Raissa H. Jajurie to introduce amendment in the period of amendments.

REMINDER OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

At this juncture, the Majority Floor Leader reminded the Members of the Parliament that it was already 5:00 P.M. in the afternoon and they would continue with the discussion on the following day.

REQUEST OF HON. MP ROMEO K. SEMA

Thereupon, Hon. MP Romeo K. Sema stated that BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 had already been discussed in the period of debate and interpellation. Thus, he humbly requested the Majority Floor Leader to move for the closure of the period of debate and interpellation thus by the following day, they could proceed to the period of amendments.

COMMENT OF THE CHAIR

Whereupon, the Chair commented that they would have to defer the period of debate and interpellation, stressing that they would have to look at how to accommodate the Members of the BTA Parliament who had signified to interpellate.

SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the session was suspended until the following day, November 26, 2021 at 1:00 in the afternoon.

It was 5:03 P.M.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

On November 26, 2020 at 1:59 P.M., Hon. Speaker Ali Pangalian M. Balindong declared the resumption of session.

INVOCATION

Upon request of the Speaker, Hon. MP Faiz S. Alauddin led the invocation.

PRESENTATION OF THE BANGSAMORO BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021 BY THE CHIEF MINISTER

At this juncture, the Chief Minister, Hon. Ahod B. Ebrahim presented to the BTA Parliament the Bangsamoro Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 with the following message:

Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Members of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament, Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmahtullahi Taala Wa Barakatuh.

Despite the massive challenges brought by COVID-19, our mandate to the Bangsamoro remains the same. We remain true to the cause of our people and to the oath that we took when we began this journey together. None of which, of course, can be possible without approving a financial program that can respond to the unprecedented needs of these trying times enabling our community to bounce back better.

It is, therefore, with great honor to submit to you, through the esteemed leadership of the Speaker of the Parliament, the Proposed Cash Budget of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 in the amount of PhP 75 billion.

The world took a massive hit because of the Coronavirus pandemic. The effects it brought to various communities left scars that will live on for generations to come. The Bangsamoro was not an exception.

In fact, the challenges are unique because we are still at the height of the transition period towards the new political entity that we now call as the BARMM. Several bureaucratic movements have been affected but not the spirit of our service and our shared advocacy of embedding moral governance in the new regional government.

As we continue navigating the transition period, I come to you again with the same intent from the previous year – to provide a regional budget that can address the pressing concerns of our various ministries, offices and other stakeholders. What makes this financial program distinct from last year are the inclusion of efforts towards the public health crisis and other significant initiatives that were not part of last year's fiscal design.

Esteemed colleagues in the BTA Parliament: I cannot thank you enough for all the work that you have done to make this transition period work. This journey has not been an easy one. To rebuild the Bangsamoro is to rebuild the very fiber of the whole country and to reinstall a new perspective when it comes to regional bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be done without the support of our counterparts from the national government, our international partners who have been supportive of this process even when we were still negotiating, our Islamic clerics who have always been the guiding light of this journey, our dear families who took the larger sacrifice of letting us be away from them when the need arises, and of course, to our dear people who joined us collectively when they ratified the Bangsamoro Organic Law and installed a system that they can call their "own."

Perhaps there are many of us who are not sure with what the future holds for the BARMM but when you think about it, that future is already in front of us and it is up to us on how to maximize the resources available to reach the farthest Bangsamoro communities and allow them to see that they, too, are part of this success.

Right now, esteemed colleagues, we have to exhaust whatever we have to reset this region and proceed with the rest of the transition period. I am hopeful that you remain one in this call and help us in crafting a regional government that adheres to our shared values as Muslims and as Bangsamoro.

Now more than ever, we need to put up moral governance to work in all levels of government.

With this proposal, ladies and gentlemen, we can make that happen. We can enter 2021 with our eyes on the prize, locked and loaded. And when we do, we are already equipped with our previous experiences and contingent plans; a thing or two that we learned from the last 365 days.

Upon your wisdom and the Grace of the Almighty Allah, I present to you the PhP75 Billion BARMM Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021, which can help us bounce back better. Dear colleagues, there is no better time to rebuild the future of the Bangsamoro than today.

Thank you so much and Wassalam.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Thereafter, the Chair *motu proprio* declared a suspension of session.

It was 2:13 P.M.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:17 P.M., the session resumed.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER AND DEPUTY MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Subsequently, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr., duly seconded and there being no objection, the body elected Hon. MP Omar Yasser C. Sema as Deputy Speaker and Hon. MP Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu as Deputy Majority Floor Leader.

ANOUNCEMENT OF THE MINORITY FLOOR LEADER

Whereupon, the Minority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia, stated that the Minority Bloc has chosen additional Deputy Minority Floor Leader in the person of Hon. MP Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr.

OBSERVATION OF HON. MP JOSE I. LORENA

When recognized, Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena stated that that the term “Assistant Majority Floor Leader” is awkward. In view thereof, he suggested the term “deputy” and then asked the body to choose between “deputy” and “assistant”.

CLARIFICATION OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

In response to the observation of Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena, the Majority Floor Leader clarified that the term used is “Deputy”.

SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

At 2:24 P.M., the Speaker *motu proprio* declared a suspension of session to pave the way for the oath taking of the following additional officers of the BTA Parliament before the Chief Minister.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:45 P.M., the session resumed with the newly elected Deputy Speaker Omar Yasser C. Sema as the Presiding Officer.

AMENDMENT OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

At this juncture, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr., duly seconded and there being no objection, the Order of Business was amended by including BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73 in the First Stage of Bills, entitled:

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE
BANGSAMORO GOVERNMENT FROM JANUARY ONE TO
DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-ONE,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Author: Government of the Day

READING OF THE TITLE OF THE BTA-CABINET BILL NO. 73

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary-General, Prof. Raby B. Angkal, read the title of BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73.

INFORMATION OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Thereafter, the Majority Floor Leader, when recognized, informed the body that BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73 is a cabinet bill filed by the Government of the Day.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, the Chair declared a 15-minute suspension of session for *As'r* Prayer.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:32 P.M., the session resumed.

SECOND STAGE OF BTA-CABINET BILL NO. 73

At this juncture, the body proceeded to the Second Stage of BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73, entitled:

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE
BANGSAMORO GOVERNMENT FROM JANUARY ONE TO
DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-ONE,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Author: Government of the Day

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF HON. MP UBAIDA C. PACASEM

Thereafter, Hon. MP Ubaida C. Pacasem, when recognized, delivered his sponsorship speech on BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73 on the Second Stage of Bill. The speech is hereto attached as Appendix “B” and made an integral part of this Journal.

REFERRAL OF BTA-CABINET BILL NO. 73 TO COMMITTEE

Whereupon, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 73 was referred to the Committee on Finance, Budget and Management.

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF BTA-PARLIAMENT BILL NO. 36

Thereafter, the body resumed the consideration of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, entitled:

AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE POLICIES FOR BANGSAMORO
OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT AND ESTABLISHING A STANDARD
OF PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE OVERSEAS
BANGSAMORO WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Parliamentary Status: Period of Debate and Interpellation

CLOSURE OF THE PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation on BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36 was closed.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP JOSE I. LORENA

Upon recognition by the Chair, Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena manifested that although the body had already terminated the period of debate and interpellation on BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, the issues on the jurisdiction of MOLE and the national agencies have not yet been resolved. He stressed that the resolution of the said issues is paramount in making the regional law effective and operative. Thus, he inquired from the Majority

Floor Leader as to what action would be taken by the body to accommodate the resolution of those issues to proceed clearly to the period of amendments.

RESPONSE OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

In response to the query of Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena, the Majority Floor Leader stated that upon consultation with the author of BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, they agreed to create a Technical Working Group (TWG) to further study the legal and constitutional implication of the bill and to propose the necessary amendments to the bill. Thus, he moved to create a TWG to study further the said bill.

QUERY OF THE CHAIR

At this point, the Chair inquired from the Majority Floor Leader as to whether the technical working group to be created is a Parliament Technical Working Group and not a Committee Technical Working Group, to which the Majority Floor Leader responded that it is a Parliament Technical Working Group.

As to whether there is no referral back of the bill to the committee, the Majority Floor Leader replied in the negative.

As to what would happen after the task of the TWG is done, the Majority Floor Leader answered that the TWG would report back to the plenary the result of its study in the period of amendments.

CLARIFICATION OF HON. MP PAISALIN P. TAGO

When recognized, Hon. MP Paisalin P. Tago clarified the composition and who would designate the members of the TWG, to which the Majority Floor Leader responded that the TWG has a minimum of five (5) to seven (7) members to be designated by the Speaker of the Parliament.

APPROVAL OF THE MOTION OF THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

The motion of the Majority Floor Leader to create a TWG to further study the BTA-Parliament Bill No. 36, having been duly seconded and there being no objection, was approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 3:50 P.M., the Speaker *motu proprio* declared a one-minute suspension of session.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:52 P.M., the session resumed.

ELECTION OF HON. MP JOSE I. LORENA AS CHAIR OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Whereupon, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader duly seconded, and there being no objection, the body elected Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena as Chairman of the TWG with authority to select other members thereof.

RELINQUISHMENT OF THE FLOOR BY THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER TO THE DEPUTY MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

At this juncture, the Majority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. relinquished the majority floor to Deputy Majority Floor Leader Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 42

Subsequently, the body proceeded to consider Committee Report No. 42 as reported out by the Committee on Accounts and Audit, through the Committee Chairperson, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman, re: BTA Organizational Structure.

ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 42

Thereupon, on motion of the Deputy Majority Floor Leader Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu, duly seconded and there being no objection, Committee Report No. 42 was adopted.

PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

Thereafter, on motion of the Deputy Majority Floor Leader Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation was opened.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP LANANG T. ALI, JR.

Upon recognition by the Chair, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. prefaced his interpellation by manifesting that he was supporting the Proposed BTA Organizational

Structure of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament. He then inquired from the Chairperson of the Committee on Accounts and Audit if there was a consultation conducted with the Government of the Day through the Chief Minister regarding the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the Committee on Accounts and Audit is composed of various members, among whom are members of the Cabinet of the Chief Minister. Thus, she stressed that the presumption of the Committee was that when committee deliberations were conducted, the interest of the Government of the Day was well represented during the committee deliberations on the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure.

On the diminution of the salary of the Secretary-General, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. pointed out that under the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, there is a diminution of the salary of the Secretary-General, adding that, the increase or decrease of a salary of a certain official should take effect after the end of his term and not during his term because it is tantamount to violation of the right to due process of the concerned official of the Parliament, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that as a result of the deliberation of the committee, the salary grade of the Secretary-General was reduced from 29 to 28 and the reason of the committee is that the salary grade of the Members of the Parliament should not be the same with the salary grade of the Secretary-General. She stated that she respects the opinion of Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. on the diminution of salary of one (1) officer of the Parliament in the middle of his tenure. She, however, emphasized that they are public servants and that they do not hold rights over the benefits and privileges which they receive and that any changes may happen in the course of their tenure or term, as long as it is validated by due process of the law and that it should be expected by the public servants.

INQUIRY OF THE CHAIR

At this juncture, the Chair inquired from Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman about the proposed salary grade of the Secretary-General to which the latter responded that at present, the salary grade of the Secretary-General is similar to salary grade of a regular

Member of the Parliament which is 29 and that in the Committee Report No. 42, the salary grade of the Secretary-General is reduced to 28.

CONTINUATION OF THE INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP LANANG T. ALI, JR.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. inquired if the proponent had researched the salary grade of the Secretary-General of the Senate and the House of Representatives, saying that, based on his readings, the Secretary-General of the two (2) bodies mentioned is the same with the salary grade of Congressman and Senator, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that she would not deny that such fact exists in both Houses of the National Congress. She, however, reiterated that the proposal is the result of the deliberation of the Committee and that it is still subject to the pleasure of the plenary.

Thereafter, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. manifested that he would propose an amendment on the particular provision in the period of amendments. Then, he pointed out that in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, the Administrative and Finance Department of the BTA Parliament is higher than the Members of the BTA Parliament, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that, what is depicted in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is the authority of the Office of the Speaker over the offices. She stressed that visually, the BTA Members are above the Administrative and Finance Department and that the line between the Office of the Speaker and the Administrative and Finance Department reflects the authority of the Office of the Speaker over those offices. She emphasized that it is not a question of who is higher between the Members of the Parliament, staff and personnel under Administrative and Finance Department, saying that it is only reflective of the authority of the Office of the Speaker over the Administrative and Finance matters of the Parliament.

As to what is the basis of the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is not just a product of the deliberation of the Committee, neither is it a random nor whimsical decision on the part of the committee members. She stated that it is based on research and documents submitted by the Office of the Speaker.

Thereupon, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. pointed out that the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is messy, stressing that the arrows of the four (4) divisions and the Deputy Speaker are crowding the box for the Office of the Speaker. Thus, the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure would need to be clarified to not have problem in its implementation, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the boxes in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure do not depict the Office of the Speaker. She emphasized that the structure reflects the authority of the Office of the Speaker as the head of the BTA Parliament when it comes to daily affairs of the Parliament, including the General Services, Administrative and Finance Division, and the over-all management of the Parliament when it comes to looking at things on a macro-level. She explained that it is the reason why the Planning Division, Management Information System Division, Internal Audit Division, Protocol and Decorum Division, and the Deputy Speaker are also directly under the supervision of the Office of the Speaker.

At this juncture, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. emphasized that, in practice, if there is a hearing, the heads of the Administrative and Finance, Plenary, and other offices are called by the BTA Parliament. The Secretary-General is in the front, considering that the offices mentioned are under the Office of the Secretary-General. He pointed out that the Speaker is in the front of the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure because the Administrative and Finance Office is under the Office of the Speaker. He also pointed out that in the old structure, if they have some administrative and financial question, the Secretary-General would ask the director of the Administrative and Finance to answer those question. He reiterated that in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, the Administrative and Finance Office is under the Office of the Speaker and they could not include the Speaker in the debate on administrative and financial matter. Whereupon, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the Committee on Accounts invited a resource person from the Administrative and Finance Division and they had not encountered any problem. Thus, she stressed that the problem mentioned by Hon. MP

Lanang T. Ali, Jr. has not existed and will not exist when the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is operationalized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 4:15P.M., on motion of the Deputy Majority Floor Leader Khadafeh G. Mangudadatu, the Chair declared a one-minute suspension of session.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:18 P.M., the session resumed.

TURNING OVER OF THE FLOOR TO THE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Thereafter, Deputy Majority Floor Leader Khadafeh G. Mangundadatu turned over the floor to the Majority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP JOSE I. LORENA

In his manifestation, Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena confirmed the statement of Hon. MP Lanang T. Ali, Jr. He confirmed that the salary grade of the Secretary-General of the Senate is equivalent to the salary grade of the Senators and the salary grade of the Secretary-General of House of Representatives is also equivalent to the salary grade of the Congressman. He expressed hope that the idea of professionalizing the Office of the Secretary-General and making its personnel career servants is the object of the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure. He further explained that the strength of the Parliament is to make the Office of the Secretary-General a career position so that it would not be politicized. He stated that in other jurisdiction, the salary grade of the Clerk of the Parliament is equivalent to the salary grade of the Members of the Parliament.

Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena informed the body that he might file a bill providing for a Parliamentary Service Act which has its own Parliamentary Service Commission under the Office of the Speaker. He pointed out that the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure does not indicate the object of making the Secretariat of the Parliament a professional agency. He further manifested that he is not objecting to the proponent, in fact he may include the same in the Parliamentary Service Act. The Parliamentary Service Act has its hold over the Parliamentary Service Commission. He also informed

the body that in his bill, the position of the Secretary-General is converted to the position of the Clerk of the Parliament.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP PAISALIN P. TAGO

As to whether the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is in accordance with the current parliamentary set up in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the proposed parliamentary structure which she presented to the body would be responsive to the needs of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament.

As to whether the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure was not copied from the organizational structure of the legislative body of the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman gave a definite negative answer. She explained that the organizational structure of the previous Regional Legislative Assembly of the defunct ARMM was too small and that it had a total of 276 permanent and co-terminus personnel. She emphasized that in the proposed structure, they have added offices and personnel that are necessary for a parliament to become an effective legislative body.

As to what are the additional divisions or offices in the proposed structure, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that they have added Translation and Interpretation Division which translates all the documents, laws and resolutions passed by the BTA Parliament into different dialects in the BARMM. She informed the body that they have also added the Office of Policy Research and Legal Services so that all the things done by the Parliament are always backed and supported by policy research. She further informed the body that they have also added Journal Division in the Proposed Structure.

As to how many employees are added to the employees of the previous Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) which is currently Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that the RLA had 276 positions. However, in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, the BTA has 1,215 positions. Thus, she stated that there are 939 additional employees in the entire BTA structure.

As to how are the committees segregated by subject matter, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman answered that in order to mainstream the institutional memory and expertise among the bureaucrats in the Parliament, they lumped together the statutory committees into three (3) divisions such as Social Services Division, Economic Affairs Division, and Governance and Infrastructure Division. She emphasized the aforesaid divisions would take care of the fifteen (15) statutory committees.

As to whether there is a committee secretariat in every committee, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that definitely there would be one (1) committee secretariat assigned to each of the committees. She said further that the idea which was mentioned by Hon. MP Paisalin P. Tago was already incorporated in the presented BTA structure.

As to how many employees do the Bills and Index Division and the Legislative Research Division have, stressing that the said divisions should be strengthened as they would be the foundation of the Parliament, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the Bills and Index Division has six (6) permanent staff headed by a Supervising Legislative Staff Officer II with salary grade 24 and the Legislative Research Division has nine (9) permanent positions and also headed by a Supervising Legislative Staff Officer II with salary grade 24.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Paisalin P. Tago manifested that he would proposed the necessary amendment in the Legislative Research Division, explaining that the said division should be headed by a pledge lawyer. He stressed that it is difficult to hire a lawyer if the highest salary grade in the division is only 24 and that in the Bill and Index Division, there is a need to add more employees other than the six (6) employees therein.

He then stated that although they have Persons with Disability Act, the said law is not followed. In view thereof, he inquired if there are positions in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure intended for the employees who are expert in sign language and who can perform sign language during the plenary session of the BTA Parliament, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that while the position of sign language interpreter is not categorically identified in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, the staff of the Translation and Interpretation Division is not only limited to the

employees who are experts in verbal languages within the region, but it is also open to employees who are expert in sign language.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP ROMEO C. SALIGA

Upon recognition by the Chair, Hon. MP Romeo C. Saliga stated that in one (1) of the activities inside the plenary hall, there was a turn over to the BTA Parliament of the translation equipment. He pointed out that although there is a Translation and Interpretation Division in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, the proponent had stated a while ago that the said division is intended for the translation of the documents, laws and resolutions into different languages within the region. In view thereof, he inquired from the proponent if there are positions intended for the translation of the plenary proceedings into different dialects during the plenary session, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the task of the Translation and Interpretation Division is to translate all the written documents for the consumption of the general public, Members of the Parliament and any other stakeholders who are interested in learning more about the outputs of the BTA Parliament. She emphasized that their vision is to empower a more robust discussion in the Parliament by ensuring that even if the Members of the Parliament speak in their native tongue, they are understood by the rest of the Members. She said that the translation equipment mentioned by Hon. MP Romeo C. Saliga would be useful to the Translation and Interpretation Division.

Hon. MP Romeo C. Saliga also pointed out that under the proposed structure, the Translation and Interpretation has only eight (8) staff. In view thereof, he asked the proponent whether the translators that would be hired are job orders or contractual employees. He stressed that the translators should be permanent employees, given the nature of their tasks, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded negatively. She explained that they really envision that the function of translation, which is crucial to the smooth operation of the Parliament especially during the plenary and the committee deliberations, is performed by the organic staff of their organization. She manifested that she would welcome any improvement in the proposed structure if Hon. MP Romeo C.

Saliga deems that the number of staff under the Translation and Interpretation Division is inadequate, considering also the number of languages they have in the region.

Hon. MP Romeo C. Saliga concluded his interpellation by manifesting that he would propose some amendments to include important positions in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP MAISARA D. LATIPH

Thereafter, Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph interpellated as to whether the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is more or less the same with the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the proposed structure is based on the proposal given to the Committee on Accounts by the Office of the Speaker. She confirmed that the Committee consulted the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives. She, however, mentioned that in the course of the Committee deliberations of the Committee, there were changes incorporated by the Committee which do not replicate the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

As to what are the departures from the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that they did not conduct comparative analysis of the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives because the idea of the members of the Committee is that the BTA Parliament is placed not only in a similar but also in a unique situation as compared to its counterparts in the National Congress.

As to whether they have looked into parliamentary structure outside the Philippine model, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that during the deliberations of the Committee, part of the issues that were raised were ideas coming from the parliamentary structures of other jurisdiction, but the result was one that is *sue generis* to the Bangsamoro Parliament.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Maisarah D. Latiph pointed out that the structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives are almost the same with the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure. Then, she asked whether they would be pursuing the same

unitary structure or a more robust parliamentary structure that the parliaments all over the world have, like a corporate body and an independent non-partisan structure that would govern the civil service and devoid of partisan political parties, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the rules of the civil service with respect to the requirements of non-partisanship among civil servants applies equally to non-political appointees of the Bangsamoro Parliament when the BTA Organizational Structure would be operationalized. She informed the body that they also look at the structure of the Senate to check on how to improve the BTA Structure and as a result thereof, they introduced the Policy Research Office. She also informed the body that considering the scope of the legislative authority of the Senate which is a national body compare to the Parliament, they cannot adopt everything in the Senate. Hence, she stated that they adopted those that are relevant to Bangsamoro Parliament.

As to what is the definition of the Secretary-General, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman answered that the Secretary-General is a person mandated by the Parliament to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Parliament to ensure that the Members of the Parliament are able to perform their functions in a manner that best fits their institution.

As to whether the Secretary-General exercises administrative supervision over all the employees of the BTA Parliament, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded negatively. She stated that under the organogram, there are offices that are directly under the supervision of the Office of the Secretary-General, but there are officials, staff and personnel that are not under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General. Those are the staff of the Members of the BTA Parliament, personnel of the offices under the Office of the Speaker.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph stated that the Secretary-General would not be effective if the legislative administrative support are not provided to him. Then, she pointed out that in the diagram presented, it appeared that the supervisory power of the Administrative and Finance Division is taken away from the Secretary-General, stressing that, it should be under him. She explained that under the ordinary course of

business, there are different types of Deputy Secretary-General. One (1) is for the legislation which embraces all the plenary, technical, committee affairs, publication, and the other one (1) is for administrative and finance. In view thereof, she inquired from the proponent why they separated the power of the Secretary-General to oversee the administrative and finance office, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that in the current set up, the Administrative and Finance Division is under the Office of the Speaker. She stated that the issue was raised earlier and that she was ready to listen to any proposed amendments on the matter at the proper time.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Maisara D. Latiph stated that she supported the manifestation of the Majority Floor Leader that the Speaker should not be burden with the administrative and finance matters. She emphasized that the Secretary-General, is the head of the Secretariat and all officials and employees. She explained that the Speaker supervises the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General reports to the Speaker directly.

INTERPELLATION OF HON. MP DIAMILA D. RAMOS

In response to the question of Hon. MP Diamila D. Ramos, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman explained that the researches gathered by the Policy Research and Legal Services would be made available to the public. She informed the body that the model for the said office is the Senate and the House of Representatives which publish their researches and made the same available to the public. She stressed that the manner by which the researches are made available either through print form, uploaded in the website, or other forms can be discussed during the operationalization of the office subject to its resources.

As to whether the Policy Research and Legal Services would entertain confidential inquiry and legal inquiry, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman answered that the office would entertain any form of question from the Members of the Parliament. She explained that the said office would also conduct and initiate its own policy research and that the level of confidence on the output is something that can be discussed further once the structure is operationalized.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Diamila D. Ramos stated that in other parliaments, they have Public Bill Office and Private Bill Office which provide advice to the Members of the Parliament on proposed bill and on how to achieve the policy objective and ensure that it is within their rules. In view thereof, she inquired if there is a counterpart office which would perform the said functions under the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, to which Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that there is the Legislative Measures and Legal Assistance Division under the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure for those various functions.

As to whether there is an office responsible for education and outreach work as the way of opening up and introducing the Parliament to the public, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that in other jurisdiction, they hold such programs where individuals from the public and even young grade school level students are allowed to visit the Parliament and observe the sessions. She, however, said that unfortunately, there is no single office that performs the said function in the proposed structure, but they could lodge the said functions in one (1) of the offices and if it is not possible, she was ready to listen to proposals to improve the structure.

As to which offices the additional thirty-eight (38) positions are lodged, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that they have additional divisions that would incur additional staff. She mentioned three (3) of the additional divisions such as Translation and Interpretation Divisions, the Legislative Research Division, and the Journal Division. She informed the body that they had also added a few staff in each of the other divisions and that the thirty-eight (38) additional positions are sprinkled all over the structure, saying that some offices lost personnel and others offices gained personnel.

Hon. MP Diamila D. Ramos concluded her interpellation by manifesting that she will raise her proposed amendment at the proper time.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP BAI MALEIHA B. CANDAO

Hon. MP Bai Maleiha B. Candao, when recognized, manifested her strong support to the statement of the Majority Floor Leader to re-instate the salary grade of the Secretary-General. She informed the body that the Secretary-General and his staff often

times, stay overnight in their office just to meet the deadline of the paper works for submission to the Members of the Parliament. She stressed that, in fact, Secretary-General, Prof. Raby B. Angkal and his staff deserve commendation for their hard works. She reminded the body that Office of the Secretary-General has continued to operate for the Parliament despite the pandemic.

INTERPELLATION OF MINORITY FLOOR LEADER LAISA M. ALAMIA

When recognized, the Minority Floor Leader, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia, inquired as to whether the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure was conceptualized and developed by the Committee on Accounts as a committee and not just by the Committee Chairperson, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded that the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure was the output of the collective wisdom of the Committee.

As to whether the principles, processes and line of authority in organizational development were taken into consideration when the structure was crafted and conceptualized and whether the form of the Parliamentary Organizational Development was also taken into consideration when the proposed structure was crafted, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded affirmatively. She explained that there were two (2) levels of discussions within the Committee, one (1) was with the Technical Working Group (TWG) and the second level was with the Committee proper. She emphasized that the principles and matters mentioned by Hon. MP Alamia had been the subject of the deliberation of the Committee.

As to whether the proposed structure was born out of a process where the Philippine National Structure with respect to the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the structure of the Parliament in other jurisdiction were also taken into consideration, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman responded in the affirmative. She stated that there were multiple thorough deliberations by the members of the Committee on Accounts and Audit where inputs from the national congressional bodies as well as bodies in other jurisdictions were raised and considered for the improvement of the original structure that reached the Committee.

As to whether the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure is a conglomeration and a mixture that are found in the structures of the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives and is also found in the structures of other countries that have a parliamentary forms of Government, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied affirmatively, adding that whatever is relevant to the reality in the BTA Parliament was duly incorporated in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure.

As to whether it is correct that the salary grade of the Secretary-General in the proposed structure is 28 and that it is not similar to salary grade of Secretary-General of the House of Representatives and the Senate which is salary grade 29, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman answered that it is factual.

As to whether it means that the salary grade of the Secretary-General does not follow with what is found in the Senate and the House of Representatives, but there are features found in the Senate and the House of Representatives that have been incorporated in the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman gave an affirmative answer, saying that they adopted what the Committee found relevant to the BTA Parliament and they did away with what the Committee deemed are not relevant to the BTA Parliament.

As to whether the current Secretary-General, who is occupying the position and receiving a salary grade of 29, has an original appointment to the position or he is on secondment from another government institution, Hon. MP Anna Tarhata S. Basman replied that she could not answer the question. She explained that they deliberated upon the proposed structure, they were thinking of the institution and not the occupiers of the positions that were deliberated in the Committee.

Whereupon, Hon. MP Laisa M. Alamia concluded her interpellation by explaining that she asked the question because they would need to be clear that if a person is on a secondment, such person receives a salary of his existing position from the previous institution and only receives an additional remuneration for the current position where he is an incumbent.

MANIFESTATION OF HON. MP NABIL A. TAN

Hon. MP Nabil A. Tan, when recognized, congratulated the Committee on Accounts for their hard work, saying that it is a development from the present set-up. He expressed hope that the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure would conform to a parliamentary system, as what he had seen was that the proposed structure is a hybrid of a unitary and a parliamentary system. He stated that, as explained by the proponent, it is reflective of the reality on the ground. He, however, emphasized that if they would relate to the parliaments of other jurisdictions it would be better if they would adopt the basic structures as provided in the parliaments of the world.

He manifested that he would support the proposal of Hon. MP Jose I. Lorena to transform the position of Secretary-General into the Clerk of the Parliament, so that it would be on the same level with the parliaments in other countries.

He also manifested that his original question was on the salary grade of the Members of the Parliament, but he remembered that they already have the Administrative Code which provides that the salary grade of the Members of the Parliament is 29.

CLOSURE OF THE PERIOD OF DEBATE AND INTERPELLATION

Thereafter, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the period of debate and interpellation was closed.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At 5:10P.M., on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, the Chair declared a one-minute suspension of session.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:14 P.M., the session resumed.

DEFERMENT OF CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED BTA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Thereupon, on motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded, and there being no objection, the body deferred the consideration of the Proposed BTA Organizational Structure until the next plenary session.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE SESSION

On motion of the Majority Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the session was adjourned until December 16, 2020 at 1:00 in the afternoon.

It was 5:16 P.M.

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I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

PROF. RABY B. ANGKAL
Secretary-General