



Republic of the Philippines
S e n a t e
Pasay City

COMMITTEE ON GAMES, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS

FOR : **HON. FRANKLIN M. DRILON**
Senate President

THRU : **ATTY. EMMA LIRIO REYES**
Deputy Secretary for Legislation

MR. RENATO BANTUG
Executive Director for Legislative Services

MR. EDUARDO GARVIDA
Bureau Director, Committee Affairs Bureau

MR. RAMON NAVEA
Service Chief, Legislative Committee Support Service "A"

SUBJECT : **JOURNAL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS, JOINT WITH THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, ON P.S. RES. NOS. 20, 65, AND 83 HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2005, 9:00 AM AT THE SEN. LAUREL AND SEN. PECSON ROOMS, SENATE, PASAY CITY**

FROM : **MR. ARCHIMEDES G. CORTEZ**
Legislative Committee Secretary

DATE : MARCH 15, 2005

Please find the attached Journal of the Public Hearing of the Committee on Games, Amusement and Sports, joint with the Committee on Finance, held on **Tuesday, March 8, 2005, 9:00 am**, at the Sen. Jose P. Laurel and Sen. Geronima T. Pecson rooms, 2nd Floor, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Bldg, Financial Center, Pasay City, relative to the above-indicated Senate resolutions.

For your information.



Republic of the Philippines
S e n a t e
Pasay City

COMMITTEE ON GAMES, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS
joint with
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

JOURNAL

Tuesday, March 8, 2005, 9:00 am
Sen. Laurel and Sen. Pecson rooms
Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City

AGENDA

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 20, entitled, "RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE PREPARATIONS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION (PSC) AND THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (POC), IN THE NEARING INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS PARTICULARLY THE 2004 OLYMPICS IN ATHENS, GREECE; 2006 ASIAN GAMES IN DOHA, QATAR; AND THE 2005 SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES (SEA GAMES) IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ASSURING THE COUNTRY'S SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION IN THESE NEARING INTERNATIONAL SPORTING MEETS AS WELL AS THE COUNTRY'S READINESS IN HOSTING THE SEA GAMES NEXT YEAR", *introduced by Sen. Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid*

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 65, entitled, "RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GAMES, AMUSEMENT AND SPORTS, TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ACTUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS OF PHILIPPINE SPORTS", *introduced by Sen. Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito Estrada*

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 83, entitled, "A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INQUIRY INTO THE PHILIPPINES' CAPABILITIES AND PLANS FOR HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN THE 2005 SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES", *introduced by Sen. Richard J. Gordon*

SENATORS PRESENT

SEN. MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID	- Chairman, Games, Amusement and Sports
SEN. RICHARD J. GORDON	- Member, Finance
SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE	- Member, Finance
SEN. JUAN M. FLAVIER	- <i>Ex-Officio</i> member
SEN. COMPANERA PIA S. CAYETANO	

RESOURCE PERSONS

Rep. Monico Puentevella, *President, Philippine Weightlifting Association*
Mr. Roberto Pagdanganan, *Chairman, Phil. SEA Games Organizing Committee (PHILSOC)*
Mr. William I. Ramirez, *Officer-in-Charge, Philippine Sports Commission (PSC)*
Mr. Ambrosio B. de Luna, *Commissioner, PSC*
Mr. Leon Montemayor, *Commissioner, PSC*
Mr. Jose Y. Mundo, *Commissioner, PSC*
Mr. Jose S. Cojuangco, *President, Philippine Olympic Committee (POC)*
Mr. Carlos Tuason, *Former Chairman, PSC*
Mr. Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco, Jr., *Former National Athlete; Consultant, PSC*

Mr. Jaime Sebastian, *Former National Athlete; Consultant, PSC*
Mr. Ernesto Fajardo, *President, Billiard and Snooker Congress of the Phils.*
Col. Salvador H. Andrada, *President, Philippine Tennis Association*
Mr. Steve C. Hontiveros, *President, Philippine Bowling Federation*
Dr. Lenora Fe. S. Brawner, *President, National Archery Association of the Phils.*
Vice Adm. Luisito Fernandez, *Secretary-General, National Golf Association of the Phils.*
Mr. Raymond S. Velayo, *President, Arnis Philippines*
Mr. Graham Lim, *Secretary-General, Basketball Association of the Philippines*
Mr. Arneil Ferrera, *National Athlete, Track and Field*
Ms. Jasmin Figueroa, *National Athlete, Archery*
Mr. Efren "Bata" Reyes, *National Athlete, Billiards*
Mr. Django Bustamante, *National Athlete, Billiards*

Several officers of various national sports associations (NSAs) and national athletes who were invited as resource persons also attended the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman, Sen. Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid, called the meeting to order at 9:42 am. He then acknowledged the presence of Sen. Juan M. Flavier.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISCUSSION

Senator Lapid explained that the hearing, joint presently with the Committee on Finance, is the second meeting of the Committee on Games, Amusement and Sports on the three Senate resolutions relative to the country's preparation for the Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) to be held on November 27 to December 5, 2005.

The Chair recalled that Secretary Pagdanganan stated during the first public hearing held on September 8, 2004 that the P400 million budget will not be enough for the SEA Games. He noted that Vietnam spent an amount equivalent to P125 billion for opening program of SEA Games alone.

When asked by the Chair for his opening statement, Senator Flavier said that he was in attendance to manifest his interest and to listen and learn.

For his part, Commissioner Ramirez said that the fundamental roles of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) are to partner with the sports associations in helping elite athletes for international games and to provide direction in grassroots sports program. He said that the PSC is affirming its support to the Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee (PHILSOC), adding that it provided a small office with staff and equipment for the PHILSOC's preparations for the SEA Games and Para Games. He explained that international games such as SEA Games, Asian Games and Olympics are under the domain of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and PHILSOC, and that PSC is limited to collaborate repairs, refurbishing of venues and other assistance to national sports associations (NSAs).

Commissioner Ramirez cited the following administrative changes that he effected in the PSC in his two months in office as officer-in-charge: purchased beddings for the Rizal Memorial dormitories which he described to be in a very difficult condition; provided training uniforms; effected cost-reduction measures in the PSC offices; set up strategic planning office; and met twice with the NSAs to establish direction and harmonious partnership. He also reported that he is planning to re-engineer the PSC for sound management and to enable it to meet the needs of elite athletes grassroots sports programs.

When asked by Senator Lapid if money is already available for food and training of the athletes, Mr. Cojuangco replied that a small amount is ready to be spent. He reported that more funds are generated from the commitments of many people, in addition to the commercial value of the SEA Games. He then appealed to the senators for support from their countrywide development fund.

Mr. Cojuangco expressed confidence in the success of the SEA Games considering the outpouring of support from countrymen in many parts of the country, including the private and local government entities volunteering their facilities and equipment for the Games. He said that the matter is being arranged with the marketing arm so that donors can also share from advertisement revenues.

Mr. Cojuangco said that it would be better to pursue the program for the athletes, noting that the POC program with the assistance of the First Gentleman has already secured a total of P160 million in pledges.

Mr. Cojuangco underscored the importance of housing the athletes in quarters, adding that the Baguio quarters are already being prepared. He also said that POC is requesting for the temporary use of the vacant International School in Makati whose classrooms can also be used as quarters. He noted that the school has many facilities requiring only minimal repair costs.

Emphasizing the importance of nutrition, Mr. Cojuangco underscored the need for athletes to have complete diet, stating that POC had already talked to dieticians and doctors who will prepare the athletes' diet and vitamins. He disclosed that P180,000 is required monthly for athletes' vitamins alone.

Mr. Cojuangco also reported that the NSAs are already preparing their physical fitness program, and that it is working on a memorandum agreement with China and Russia for the training of Filipino athletes. We should not anymore rely solely on the natural ability or inborn quality of athletes, he added.

Mr. Cojuangco said that the programs are not only intended for the SEA Games, but also for the Asian Games in 2006 and the Olympics in 2008.

When asked by the Chair to comment on the assumption of Michael Keon that the Philippines we could land only in third or fourth place in the SEA Games this year, Mr. Cojuangco replied that the country can win the overall championship if the program is followed. He expressed confidence that the programs for the diet, food, training and equipment of athletes will proceed regularly starting next month. He said that the country will win with proper training and disposition and without resorting to manipulation.

Responding to the query of Senator Enrile about the case of amateur golf champion Juvic Pagunsan who decided to turn professional due a reported misunderstanding with the officials of the Philippine Golf Association, Mr. Cojuangco said that the POC is trying to address similar concerns affecting every NSAs, and that misunderstandings do really happen in any undertakings. He gave assurance that the POC will act on the matter.

Senator Enrile insisted for an explanation of the cause of Pagunsan's complaints, adding that he will oppose any request for government funding if NSAs select athletes not based on merit but on "bata-bata" system.

Mr. Fernandez explained that the problem started when Mr. Pagunsan was penalized by two strokes in a golf tournament that was recently held in Bacolod City because his caddy was standing behind him when he was putting. He said that Mr. Pagunsan resented the decision because it caused his team to lose.

Responding to further queries by Senator Enrile, Mr. Fernandez said that people behind Mr. Pagunsan are using the golf champion at the expense of the country's interest. He said that Mr. Pagunsan was not disqualified from being part of the national team and admitted that the latter is the number one amateur golfer at present.

When asked about the technicality of the penalty, Mr. Cojuangco said that the two-stroke penalty is part of the rules in golf. He stated that Mr. Pagunsan had long been anxious to turn professional and that the Bacolod incident might have induced him to proceed with his plan. The POC president said that he was trying to convince Mr. Pagunsan to remain amateur so he could compete in the SEA Games. He asked for some time to talk to the people concerned, hoping to come up with some positive arrangements.

Responding to the queries of Senator Flavio about how much more is needed to hold the SEA Games, Mr. Cojuangco said that the P160 million will be used for food, vitamins and additives of athletes, their training needs and travels for international competition. He said that a bigger budgetary requirement is for the repair and refurbishing of event venues, including Rizal Memorial Complex whose tartan tracks alone require P90 million. He also said that the budget for security would also be substantial because the SEA Games will be held in about 30 event venues all over the country, including Cebu, Bacolod, Mandaue, Lipa, Los Banos, Marikina, Subic, Clark Field and Pasig.

Mr. Cojuangco also said that there are other indeterminable expenses, citing equestrian as an example which needed to shoulder the transportation and billeting expenses of 24 foreign officials so that an equestrian event will be officially sanctioned.

Another major expense item in the SEA Games is the accommodation and food of the athletes, added Mr. Cojuangco. He stated that PHILSOC charges only \$30 per person per day, which is too small for hotel bookings and meals. He said that they plan to request the SEA Games Federation in their next meeting for additional \$5 or \$10 per person per day.

In reply to further queries of Senator Flavio, Mr. Cojuangco said that only P50 million would be needed for the opening and closing ceremonies, and that the opening program will be held in Luneta, that would accommodate 250,000 persons. He said that a lot of volunteers, including Ryan Cayabyab, would be tapped to be able to come up with a very good show that can be televised to the ten participating countries.

When asked by Senator Flavio of his specific request from the Senate, Mr. Cojuangco disclosed that each member of the House of Representatives pledged P1 million each; and that if the lower house can contribute P200 million, and another P200 million from the Senate, it would be a lot easier for the PHILSOC. He recalled that the Chair promised them an amount the last time their group visited the Senate.

In reply, the Chair suggested that they appeal to the President for the allocation of at least P1 billion from the P10 billion generated from reducing pork barrel allocations.

Mr. Cojuangco disclosed: that Globe pledged at least P100 million; that there is an ongoing talks with Smart; that the Philippine Airlines would probably be the official carrier of the athletes; that there are about 20 companies wanting to sponsor the athletes' uniforms; and that all these amounts would be sufficient already if the donations from the senators and representatives are added to the other commitments.

On the matter of preparing for the *Para Games*, Mr. Cojuangco said that there is another group taking charge of the preparations for the event.

Senator Enrile wondered why the Committee on Finance is part of the hearing when there is no specific request for budgetary appropriation. The Chair explained that the meeting was being held jointly with Committee on Finance in view of the secondary referral of the P.S. Res. No. 83 to the said committee. Senator Enrile, after reading into the record the resolutive clause of P. S. Res. No. 83, insisted that there is no budgetary request in the proposal that would warrant the referral of the same to the Committee on Finance. He apologized that he cannot contribute to the SEA Games funds because he does not have pork barrel.

When asked by the Chair whether there is a pledge from the President or PAGCOR, Mr. Cojuangco responded in the negative. On the composition of the marketing arm, he said that the group is in-house composed of volunteer marketing professionals who go to companies to solicit sponsorships.

When asked by Senator Lapid for an update report, Mr. Tuason stated that the First Gentleman Foundation has already received P160 million in commitments, and the amount is being allocated to various NSAs for their training program through a training committee composed of representatives from the PSC, POC and the Foundation. He disclosed that 12 NSAs have already sent their request for allocation; fourteen are still being coordinated; and the

rest have yet to submit their proposals. He also said that the NSAs have to be asked of their priorities because some requests are too much to be accommodated by the sponsorships.

Recalling the statement of Mr. Pagdanganan that PHILSOC will make do with P400 million, Senator Lapid inquired how can such amount be sufficient for the SEA Games. In reply, Mr. Pagdanganan clarified that the amount would only be for operational needs, and that the amount needed for the venues was yet to be determined during the first hearing.

Mr. Pagdanganan disclosed that PHILSOC has more or less decided already for the inclusion of 41 sports and 395 events in the SEA Games, as well as the venues. He said that PHILSOC's concern is the funding for expenses like security and food of the athletes. Despite the headways, there are still a lot of things to be done, he added. He reported that the marketing campaign will be formally launched the following week and that the logo, music and lyrics for the SEA Games have already been commissioned.

When asked by the Chair on the security of the athletes, Mr. Pagdanganan said that the matter is a major issue being discussed by a committee at PHILSOC. He also said he had never doubted that the Philippines can successfully host the SEA Games, citing the previous instances when the country hosted the events in 1981 and 1991.

Responding to the queries of Senator Gordon regarding the number of sports and venues, Mr. Pagdanganan said that there are a total of 41 sports and 395 events, 80 percent of them be held in Metro Manila, with the other sports to be held in venues located in Lipa, Subic Bay Freeport, Cebu, Danao, and Bacolod. He also said that there are enough venues and that the LGU hosts would be the ones to ensure that the venues meet international standards.

Senator Gordon expressed his concern over the LGUs taking charge of ensuring that the venues meet the required standards. He said he wants to be very sure that there would be no comments when the athletes leave the country. He explained that he filed his resolution to find out what the problems are. He underscored the need to consider a lot of things such as standards, peace and order and coordination with LGUs. In reply, Mr. Pagdanganan said that PHILSOC has organized committees to handle every aspect of the preparations, citing the forthcoming signing of memorandum of agreement with various LGUs and NSAs. He admitted though that there are still a lot of things to be done.

Senator Gordon said he was very much concerned about the attitude of waiting until the last minute and catch up later. He said that it is very important that PHILSOC heightens the campaign and preparations this time. He also lamented that the country prepares for an event but not for the long term, noting that performance of the country in sports has been declining over the years. The SEA Games should be an opportunity for the country to raise the aspirations and spirits of its people, he remarked.

Commenting on Senator Gordon's observation that there is lack of public awareness about the SEA Games, Mr. Cojuangco said that POC feels differently, adding that PHILSOC has already been talking to those people concerned with venues and that there have been many people volunteering their services for free. He noted that the performance of the athletes has been improving, citing the case of archery, and that many NSAs have already been following their training program. He said that the machinery has already been set up but it needs more funding, expressing confidence that with commitments from donors and with unity from all concerned sectors, better results can happen.

Senator Gordon lamented that he is beginning to feel that PHILSOC does not need the assistance of the Committee anymore, explaining that he filed his resolution to be able to find out how the Committee can assist. He underscored the need to harness greater enthusiasm in the people and to get more volunteers, adding that lack of money has always been a problem.

Senator Gordon further observed that China has already been preparing for the 2008 Beijing Olympics when he was still the Secretary of Tourism, noting that the Philippines is working late as usual.

Mr. Pagdanganan stressed that they have already computed how much they need for the organization and for the venues; that there are already volunteers working for them without pay; that the private sectors are contributing, including the First Gentleman Foundation; and that the NSAs are preparing.

When asked how much PHILSOC is receiving from the Department of Tourism, Mr. Pagdanganan said that it receives little from the Department. Senator Gordon said that he wants to help because he knows where to get the money from the DOT. He said that he was asking questions because he wants to be supportive. Mr. Pagdanganan said he welcomes Senator Gordon's support and that PHILSOC needs help for operations and venues.

Mr. Andrada explained that the sports in the country keep on deteriorating because of the removal of the 5% share of the PSC from the gross earnings of PAGCOR. He said that funding is important in sports, noting that the country placed second in 1991 SEA Games, with 91 gold medals, because of adequate funding.

Senator Cayetano said that she will file a resolution to look into the matter of 5% share of the PSC from PAGCOR, including the customs duties on sports equipment. She agreed with Mr. Andara that funding has a lot to do with sports, citing the case of Australia, which she said, spent almost \$1 million per athlete who won a gold medal. She said that she was not recommending that the country spend a million pesos per athlete but there is a need to define parameters and expectations.

Senator Cayetano asked for the list of sports with sponsors already because she wants to find out where other corporations and some senators can provide support, citing that she herself wants to support triathlon, duathlon, and volleyball teams.

Mr. Cojuangco replied that all sports are already covered by the P160 million generated by the First Gentleman Foundation, reiterating that the amount would be exclusively used for additives such as vitamins and minerals, for training equipment, for foreign travels, and for hiring experts. He said that the feeding of the athletes will be handled by the PSC and that national athletes will be housed in Baguio or Manila under the supervision of nutritionist, psychologists, and physical fitness experts.

When asked whether the sponsorship covers the hiring of coaches, Mr. Cojuangco replied in the affirmative. Senator Cayetano questioned the accuracy of the statement of Mr. Cojuangco, citing the letters to her of triathlon athletes to her asking for support. Mr. Cojuangco explained that the group may have initially asked less than what it actually needs. He said that PHILSOC has set up a group to talk to each of the NSAs on the details of their request for assistance.

Noting that the private sponsorship to NSAs does not include allowances of athletes, Senator Cayetano, underscored the need to find other means to cover the allowances of athletes, citing the case of a member of the cycling team who raises her three children on a meager income from gardening in a cemetery. The lady senator agreed with the direction of the POC to have a continuing program of private sponsorship of athletes up to the Asian Games and the Olympics, and even beyond the sporting life of athletes who behave properly.

When asked whether there is a program to improve the expertise of coaches, Mr. Cojuangco reported of the exchange program arranged by the First Gentleman with the Ministry of Sports in China in 14 sports, as well as his contacts with Australia and the US to assist the Philippines in some sports. He also mentioned that the boxing association is looking for a Cuban coach, and that there have been efforts to upgrade technology in sports, in addition to physical fitness and nutrition.

Senator Cayetano volunteered her services as chairman of the Committee on Health in facilitating some commitments from the pharmaceutical groups for vitamins and other health needs of the athletes.

Commissioner Ramirez stated that, upon assumption to office, the PSC put up the Philippine Institute of Sports in Ultra to upgrade Filipino coaches and establish sports sciences and nutrition, including athletes' career education. He also reported that Centrum Philippines

donated four million of *Centrum Plus* and other goods. The PSC also repaired the long tennis court at the Rizal Memorial Complex, with the repair of the shooting and track oval facilities to start soon with the help of PAGCOR, the Commissioner reported. He reaffirmed that the PSC and the POC are working very hard to heighten interest and support for the Games, adding that cooperation among athletes and the NSAs is vital to ensuring success not only in the SEA Games but also toward achieving the first gold medal ever in Beijing Olympics. Moreover, Commissioner Ramirez reported the increase in food allowance of athletes from P250 to P350 and that he hoped to relocate the athletes from the 70-year old Rizal Memorial Complex.

Senator Cayetano stated that she received commitments from Filipino communities during her recent trip to the US, even as she underscored the need for community involvement. She also said that there is a need to focus on the long term plans as well, citing that she will continue to help her duathlon team by sending them to the world championship in September even though the event will not be included in the SEA Games this year.

Citing a case in one sport where a team was effectively prevented from participating in an international competition due to a belated endorsement from the concerned sport association, Senator Cayetano inquired whether there is an appeal system to address the matter. Commissioner Ramirez responded that the PSC does not send athletes without the approval of the NSA concerned, and that the PSC only exercises supervisory power over NSAs which are private organizations.

Mr. Cojuangco confirmed the occurrence of instances similar to the one cited by the lady senator. He said that the POC had already made it clear with the NSAs of the need to extract discipline from all athletes, citing that anyone who does not follow the rules of the training and the program, even if he or she is a sure gold medal winner, will not be allowed to compete.

When asked whether there is an appeal process in the NSA to exclude certain athletes, Mr. Cojuangco said that there is an appeal to the POC Executive Board. He cited the previous case he had with the POC before he appealed for the inclusion of two more athletes in equestrian in addition to the two riders who were previously approved. Senator Cayetano said she appreciated knowing the process because she does not want to intervene in similar issues. She lamented the case of the cycling team which failed to compete because the endorsement was issued to the athletes only three days before the event. Mr. Cojuangco agreed that the POC must be given at least two months to consider the case, admitting though that certain exceptions will have to be allowed, citing instances of delayed receipt of invitations and difficulty in sourcing funds.

As to the adequacy of athletes' quarters, Mr. Cojuangco said that, in addition to Baguio and Ultra, POC is looking into the possibility of temporarily using the facilities of the vacated International School in Makati. He noted that it is a government-owned, with a gym, football field, track and field, and swimming pool, complete with athletic and school rooms, and a big cafeteria or dining hall. He said that the request was sent to Malacanang two months ago. Senator Cayetano suggested that the Chair send a similar letter which she will co-sign.

When asked by Senator Cayetano if there is a group that handles the volunteer program, Mr. Pagdanganan said that the volunteer group is headed by Bam Aquino with Marc Castrodos of the National Youth Commission. He said that the event would need 10,000 to 12,000 volunteers who will serve as ushers, drivers of officials, manpower to various areas of competition and others to be tapped in the opening and closing programs. He further said that the volunteers will be provided with uniforms and meals but they will have to shoulder their own transportation expenses.

Asked by Senator Lapid for his statement, Mr. Sebastian said he currently serves as PSC consultant in weightlifting; that he had suffered a stroke; and that he only receives allowance from the PSC. Commissioner Ramirez confirmed that Mr. Sebastian receives from PSC P15,000 salary monthly, plus medicine allowance.

Senator Lapid suggested that athletes be provided with insurance for their protection when they retire or become injured, citing the case of Rolando Navarete. He also announced that the Committee will conduct a public hearing on the safety and welfare of boxers after the match of Pacquiao, and that he would sponsor a golf tournament for livelihood assistance of retired or injured boxers.

At this point, Commissioner Ramirez suggested the establishment of a Philippine Sports Hall of Fame, noting that the same has not been set up years after the implementing law was passed, and that the Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia without a hall of fame for sports. He said that the place has already been identified but money is needed for the building. The Chair then suggested that Mr. Graham Lim and the PSC coordinate the design and the cost of the building. Commissioner Ramirez disclosed that the PSC has already started to collect memorabilia and that it hopes to have the initial launching by December 2006.

Mr. Pagdanganan remarked that PHILSOC is doing its best to be successful in the SEA Games because the event can serve as a catalyst to improve Philippine sports in the long-term. He cited the preparations being undertaken by PHILSOC, including the selection of sports, venues, working committees, volunteers, and security. Noting that the share of the private sector currently exceeds that from the government than in 1991 SEA Games where the share of the private sector was only P1 for every P5, Mr. Pagdanganan said that PHILSOC needs the help of the Government and the Committee. He said that the support of the First Gentleman Foundation is encouraging but more funds are needed. The Chair assured PHILSOC of the support of the Committee.

When asked about the pledges he received after winning silver medal in the Olympics, Mr. Velasco said that the pledges have remained as such up to the present, including the P2.5 million commitment from the House of Representatives, the housing unit and the P1 million pledge from the Manila Government. At this point, Senator Lapid disclosed that he filed a bill in the Senate to give P2 million to every champion or gold medalist in international events.

In reply to further queries by Senator Lapid, Mr. Velasco said that the boxing team has a great chance of winning in the Games, noting the improved training of the athletes in Baguio and the all out support of Mr. Manny Lopez and the PSC.

When asked about the readiness of the billiard team in the SEA Games, Mr. Reyes said that there are young billiard players who are improving their skill. Mr. Bustamante, for his part, said that they are practicing almost everyday. Both successively disclosed that their only request was for the finalization of their incentives.

Responding to the query of the Chair, Commissioner Ramirez said that the grant of incentives is endorsed by the NSAs to the PSC, which in turn administers the incentives.

Dr. Brawner disclosed that archery team expects that all its eight athletes will get gold medals in the SEA Games. She lamented though that their training equipment such as arrows and bows have yet to arrive.

When asked by the Chair to respond, Commissioner Ramirez explained that PSC cannot respond to all the needs of the NSAs given the former's limited budget. The NSAs should also provide for their own because they are autonomous, he added. Mr. Cojuangco said that San Miguel is the sponsor of archery team, adding that the equipment can be ordered as soon as the committee in charge of the funding is done with its discussion with the NSAs.

Ms. Figueroa said that the whole team is preparing for the SEA Games, and that she will do her best to be better.

When asked by the Chair for his report, Mr. Velayo said that the Philippines can win gold medals in arnis, noting that the sport is indigenous. He however underscored the need for the athletes to have international exposure, adding that arnis received the smallest budget allocation from sponsors, amounting to only P4 million. He also lamented that arnis has no conducive venue for training in the Philippines, and that its athletes have no adequate training equipment and uniforms.

Mr. Velayo said that they have already found a suitable place and that PSC has already granted permission for its use by the arnis athletes. What they need is some funding for repair of the place, he added. Commissioner Ramirez promised prompt action on the request.

Mr. Velayo further stated that support to arnis is imperative to give the country an identity, citing China being known for *wushu*, Thailand for *muaythai*, Japan for *judo*, Korea for *taekwondo*, and France and Europe for fencing. He said that arnis could have been included in previous SEA Games had it not been for politics, noting that the country could have attained the overall championship in the 1991 SEA Games had arnis been included in the list of sports. As a result of the delay in the inclusion of arnis in the SEA Games, the country's arnis team is projected to get only six gold medals from the

previous potential of 14. He assured that the country is superior in all Southeast Asian countries in the sport of stick fighting.

Responding to the queries of Senator Lapid, Mr. Ferrera disclosed that the athletics team is aiming for 12 to 15 gold medals in the coming SEA Games. He requested for the early release of money from sponsors to be able to sustain their training requirements. He said that he is confident to land second place in his event, noting the improvements in his performance. He also said that Thailand is the country's fiercest rival in sprint, and that the country has strong chances in marathon and long jump. Mr. Ferrera said he sees the next Lydia de Vega in the person of Grace Vilgar, adding that the latter's performance can further improve if she is given the chance to train in the US.

For bowling, Mr. Hontiveros said that Paeng Nepomuceno begged off from participating because he is not yet physically fit, but six of their women's team will be participating, including Liza del Rosario and Cecil Yap. He admitted that, unlike other sports, it is very difficult to predict the number of gold medals that bowling would get. He said though that bowling can get at least 3 gold medals for its worst performance. He also disclosed that Bong Coo will not participate because she had not been actively playing anymore.

Representative Puentevella inquired whether there is problem over the practice in billiards of spreading the players to play certain events so that everybody can have the chance to play, Mr. Reyes said that they have no problem with the system, adding that they now have many good players in the pool. He assured that the Filipino billiard players can dominate SEA Games but will have difficult time in the Asian Games.

Responding to the queries of Representative Puentevella, Mr. Hontiveros said there will be a total of 8 gold medals at stake in billiards, and that all the 10 players in billiards will have a chance to play. Representative Puentevella expressed concern over such practice because it limits the best billiard players to one or two games a piece. He lamented that the country has so many players for few events. Mr. Hontiveros disclosed that Mr. Reyes will be asked to play in carom as well because he actually started as a "karambola" player.

When asked by the Chair to give his closing statement, Mr. Pagdanganan underscored the need for unity, adding that PHILSOC is counting on the assistance of the members of Congress. Mr. Cojuangco, for his part, said that what PHILSOC is promoting is the "bayanihan" spirit, expressing hope that the success of the project will rekindle public interest in sports. Mr. Ramirez expressed confidence in the capacity of the Filipinos to rise above the challenges in the preparations for the SEA Games, adding that the Filipino athletes will fight hard to win the championship.

In response to the query of Senator Lapid, Mr. Pagdanganan said that PHILSOC is expecting about 7,000 tourists during the SEA Games. The Chair underscored the need for the country to win medals to be able to provide foreigners with a positive outlook of the country, neutralizing the negative publicity that the country gets because of the Mindanao problem.

Commissioner de Luna stated that PSC is planning to sponsor P200,000 for the May 27 golf tournament being spearheaded by the Chair, noting that the proceeds of the event will go to retired athletes.

Confirming the disclosure of Representative Puentevella, Commissioner Ramirez said that they postponed their scheduled trip to China to be able to attend the public hearing.

At this point, Mr. Pagdanganan announced the formal launching of the marketing program of PHILSOC for the SEA Games on March 15, and invited everyone to the occasion.

On the complaint of Mr. Lim that the basketball women's team is practicing in their gym without light, Commissioner Ramirez gave assurance that the PSC will act on the matter in a few days.

For his closing statement, Senator Lapid thanked all the resource persons and guests, and assured that the meeting will not be the last gathering of sports officials and athletes, saying that the future meetings will be informal ones so that anyone can express himself or herself freely. He called on the sports officials and athletes for a united action towards the goal of the Philippine team to attain the overall championship in the SEA Games.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.