

COMMITTEE ON URBAN PLANNING, HOUSING & RESETTLEMENT
Joint with
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE & GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

2ND PUBLIC HEARING
Friday, October 8, 2004
Sen. Claro M. Recto Room
9:00 A.M.

Guests/Resource persons:

Ms. Marilou Aferez, National President, Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, Inc. (SHDA); Mr. Sonny Ducay, Executive Director, SHDA; Mr. Pedro Tario, Adviser to the President and Former President, The Chamber of Real Estates and Builders Association, Inc. (CREBA); Dr. Anna Marie Karaos, Executive Director, Institute of Church and Social Issues (ICSI); Mr. Roberto Ador, Executive Director, People's Legislative Council for Population Development (PLCPD); Ms. Ana Oliveros, Executive Director, Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor (FDUP); Atty. Marlon Manuel, Executive Director, SALIGAN (Urban Poor Desk); Atty. Miriam Corazon Quizon, Executive Director, Philippine Undertaking for Social Housing, Inc. (PUSH); Mr. Halley Atienza, National Coordinator, Urban Poor Colloquim (UPC); Atty. Bercy Garcia, Legal Counsel, National Real Estate Association (NREA); Prof. Rosario Jimenez, UP School of Urban and Regional Planning (UP-SURP)

AGENDA

SBN 1107 – “AN ACT DEFINING THE VISION AND POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT SECTOR, CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES” (*Introduced by Senator Franklin M. Drilon*)

SBN 1298 – “AN ACT DEFINING THE VISION AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT IN THE HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT SECTOR, CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES” (*Introduced by Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon*)

HIGHLIGHTS

Present during the hearing were Senate President Pro tempore Juan Flavier, and Senator Biazon (chairman and presiding).

The Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement, chaired by Senator Biazon, conducted a public hearing on the bills (SB Nos. 1107 and 1298) which seek to create the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The hearing was held at the Senator Claro M. Recto Room, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Bldg., Pasay City.

At the outset, Senator Biazon pointed out the need to put together a rational policy and effective program to address the problem of housing, adding that this concern would encompass the agenda of President Macapagal-Arroyo on shelter and the decongestion of

Manila. He added that two bills under consideration, he said, would result in the restructuring of the various housing agencies.

Atty. Bercy Garcia, legal counsel of the National Real Estate Association (NREA), interposed no objection to the evolution of a housing council into a housing department with quasi-judicial powers, including jurisdiction cases involving eviction of squatters and settlements of conflicts in subdivisions.

To the query of Senator Flavio Reyes if the requirement for relocation sites for evicted squatters would only apply to occupied government property, the Chair opined that there appeared to be no distinction considering the definition of squatting as *“occupation of land not owned by the occupier and the land may be both private and public”*.

While expressing his support for the two measures, Mr. Pedro Tario, adviser of the Chamber of Real Estates and Builders Association (CREBA), explained that the provisions of SB No. 1298 have covered all the requirements for the creation of a department, including directing plans for the creation of industrial or a tourist city which are essential in attracting visitors from other countries.

He would also submit his inputs on the bills regarding provisions on the power of adjudication, taking into account the existing court procedures.

Dr. Rosario Jimenez, professor of the UP School of Urban and Regional Planning (UP-SURP), commented that the proposed creation of the housing department would complement the pending legislation on the National Land Use Act. She also said that there should be a provision on the requirement for a pool of urban and regional planners to meet the vision and mission of the proposed housing department. It should initiate addressing the issue of disposable and alienable lands so that relocated families would not be confronted with the court order to vacate their relocation sites.

Mr. Roberto Ador, executive director of the People’s Legislative Council for Population Development (PLCPD), gave the following comments and observations in relation to the creation of the housing department: there is need to reinforce the implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act; to ensure that programs, funds and the appropriate agencies within the department would be able to focus and have a targeted approach to the low-income families; and to pursue its transformation into a true one-stop shot that would ensure efficiency, lesser bureaucratic red tape and enforcement of accountability among housing agencies.

Mr. Sony Ducay, executive director of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, Inc. (SHDA), said that he already submitted earlier to the Committee the comments and recommendations of his organization, but would also submit a line-by-line specific suggestions and comments on the proposed measures. He also expressed concern on the sustainability of financing for the housing sector as he cited traditional sources of funds like the Social Security System (SSS), the Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS) and the Pag-ibig.

He also feared that these traditional financial institutions, with only Pag-ibig as the most active in granting loans, would not be able to address the concerns for the housing program, taking into account the estimated P50 billion required budget for 200,000 units annual production at a price of P250,000 per housing unit.

At this juncture, the Chair asked the resource persons to consider in their submission of the proposed amendments of the bills to Committee the mobilization or tapping of available domestic funds for the housing program. He also said that a Technical Working Group might be constituted in order to work on a revised version of the bills.

Dr. Anna Marie Karaos, executive director of the Institute of Church and Social Issues (ICSI), said that her group expressed full support for the bills which would create the Department of Housing and Urban Development, particularly the suggestion for the creation of the local housing boards at the local government level. She added that this would empower the local governments to take primary responsibility in the delivery of housing needs.

She also would like to support the idea of strengthening the secondary mortgage finance system, adding that there should be a specific government body to handle this concern. There should also be a review of the government's policy on resettlement, she said, because the government is losing a lot of money for relocating affected families.

Before adjournment, Senator Biazon reminded the resource persons the submission of their proposed amendments of the bills to the Committee. He also thanked them for sharing their views and comments on the bills which seek to create a department that would formulate good policies and programs to address the problem of housing in the country.

The hearing was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

*Prepared and submitted by Mr. Cesar R. Umali
Legislative Committee Secretary
Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement*