

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 8881



Introduced by Rep. Munir M. Arbison

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is said that no person was ever honored for what he received; rather, he is honored in recognition of what he has given. In this case, the naming of Awang-Upi-Lebak Road in honor of the Honorable Datu Simeon A. Datumanong is a fitting tribute to the man who had given so much to his province and country.

Datu Sim or Manong Sim, as he was known to his friends, colleagues, and constituents when he was still alive, had a distinguished career serving the government and the people – a career that spanned for more than fifty years.

He had shown exemplary leadership potential at a young age and, that being the case, he was elected Provincial Board Member of the undivided Cotabato Province at age 28. In 1968, he was elected as its Vice Governor and later became its Governor. Subsequently, he also became the first Governor of Maguindanao when the Empire Province of Cotabato was finally subdivided. For years, he would also serve the then Autonomous Region XII in various capacities.

In 1984, Datu Sim would start his long and illustrious vocation as a Member of the Legislature by being elected to the Regular Batasang Pambansa representing the Province of Maguindanao, an office he would hold many times until his retirement from politics in 2013.

He also served as Secretary of Justice as well as the Department of Public Works and Highways. In fact, it was through his initiative when he was the DPWH Secretary that the Awang-Upi-Lebak Road became a reality. At that time, the peace and order situation in the area was very volatile, but because the said road would be crucial to the development of the area, he saw to it that its creation would be realized.

As a public servant, Datu Sim was able to establish himself as a true champion not only of his fellow Muslim Filipinos but all Filipinos alike. He ensured the well-being of his constituents by sponsoring the construction and rehabilitation of numerous roads and infrastructure projects as well as granting scholarships, housing, and medical and financial assistance, to name a few. As the Secretary of two national agencies, he had shown nothing but integrity, honesty, competence, and dedication to his job. As a legislator, he became a character that is worth emulating. An elder statesman, if you will.

Datu Sim had received many awards and recognitions during his lifetime, including being named as one of the recipients of the Ten Outstanding Young Men Award in 1974. These awards and recognitions prove that he had lived a remarkable and honorable life. To celebrate his exemplary life further, it is only fitting that a national road be named after him. The act of renaming national roads after remarkable individuals is not arbitrary; rather, it is done to help us recollect their noteworthy contributions to society. The Awang-Upi_Lebak National Road plays an important role in connecting the people of Maguindanao and adjacent provinces. Renaming it to be the Datu Simeon A. Datumanong National Highway will give it an extra purpose, and that is to serve as an inspiration to the people of Maguindanao and a reminder that a great man had lived amongst them.

In view of the foregoing, I earnestly seek the immediate passage of this bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Datu Simeon A. Datumanong', with a long, sweeping underline.

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**AN ACT RENAMING THE AWANG – UPI – LEBAK ROAD IN THE
PROVINCE OF MAGUINDANAO TO
DATU SIMEON A. DATUMANONG NATIONAL HIGHWAY**

*Be enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the
Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. In recognition of the invaluable public service rendered by Datu Simeon A. Datumanong to the people of this country as Cabinet Secretary in the Department of Justice, Department of Public Works and Highways and Office of the Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities, to Mindanao and most especially in the province of Maguindanao as Provincial Governor, Congressman and other various capacities, the Awang- Upi – Lebak Road shall be renamed as Datu Simeon A. Datumanong National Highway.

SECTION 2. The Department of Public Works and Highways shall place appropriate markers along the Datu Simeon A. Datumanong National Highway and issue the pertinent rules, orders and circulars to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect immediately upon approval.

Approved.