

JOURNAL NO. 1
Monday, July 26, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

This being the day fixed in accordance with the Constitution for the beginning of the First Regular Session of the Thirteenth Congress, the Secretary General of the House of Representatives, the Honorable Roberto P. Nazareno, called the session to order at ten o'clock in the morning.

NATIONAL ANTHEM AND PRAYER

Subsequently, the House Chorale led the singing of the National Anthem and thereafter, Rep. Antonio V. Cuenco delivered the following invocation:

Almighty and loving Father, as we usher in the Thirteenth Congress, we come to You once again in prayer, with gratitude for the months that passed which bore witness to the enduring spirit of democracy. We thank You for inspiring us to uphold its hallowed institutions.

As we gather here today, bearing the responsibility and the challenge entrusted upon us by the Filipino people, we beseech You to unite us with one mind, one spirit and one purpose. Stretch out Your hand, that we may strive to heal the wounds of divisiveness and let us seek unity founded on shared respect for democracy and on the noble principle of serving the people. Let there be concord instead of discord among us.

Allow us to extend our hand of welcome to our new colleagues, that You lead them with the same divine guidance that You accorded us in the past. We call on You to grant us the wisdom and strength to fulfill the purpose for which You have individually put us in different roles in this House. Inspire us to work each day, filled with determination to build a shelter strong enough to withstand the strongest storm.

In this time of uncertainty, much depends on our commitment to change inequitable structures of oppression. As we hold in our hands the lives of each and every Filipino here and overseas, we look to You for guidance on how best to serve them and shield them from the perils of poverty and injustice.

In our vision to create a strong Republic, we entreat You to steer us in the right direction that we may fulfill our promise to create equal opportunities for the people, provide for good health and education, and engender possibilities for growth for all regions of our beloved nation. May we have enough resources to see these aspirations to the end. If we, by any chance, falter in our resolve, stretch out Your hand and deliver us from doubt and fear, and let us feel again the convictions of our heart and soul, mind and spirit.

We seek Your advice in making life-altering decisions, that we put into service measures steeped in efficiency and righteousness. We ask You to bless our leaders with Divine wisdom to govern our country with laws that will usher in justice, peace and prosperity.

Our country today, dear Lord, faces many grave problems. We turn to You for salvation.

But our salvation, Lord, will not be quick or easy, nor will it come without the collective toils and strivings of this House working overtime as the representatives of our troubled but unvanquished nation. We know that You will strengthen the sinews of our determination and valor so that we can play our part in our deliverance. You will prepare our hands for struggle, and clear our minds of confusion and fear. You will vitiate our hardships with Your graces, and wipe away

our tears with Your blessings. And the falling debris of our misfortunes will be mitigated by the upswing of our common prayers.

Allow us then, O Lord, to proceed with our deliberations today, conscious of our obligations to You, our people, our history and our country.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!
Amen.

ROLL CALL

Thereafter, upon direction of the Presiding Officer, Deputy Secretary General Antonio A. Adasa Jr. called the Roll of Members elected from the legislative districts, apportioned among the provinces and cities, and party list organizations, in alphabetical order:

ABRA

Lone District

LUIS P. BERSAMIN JR.

AGUSAN DEL NORTE (with the city of Butuan)

First District

LEOVIGILDO B. BANAAG

Second District

MA. ANGELICA ROSEDELL M. AMANTE

AGUSAN DEL SUR

Lone District

RODOLFO "OMPONG" G. PLAZA *

AKLAN

Lone District

FLORENCIO T. MIRAFLORES

ALBAY (with the cities of Legaspi, Ligao and Tabaco)

First District

EDCEL C. LAGMAN

Second District

CARLOS R. IMPERIAL

Third District

JOEY SARTE SALCEDA

ANTIPOLO CITY

First District

RONALDO V. PUNO

Second District

VICTOR R. SUMULONG
ANTIQUE

Lone District

EXEQUIEL B. JAVIER

APAYAO

Lone District

ELIAS C. BULUT JR.

AURORA

Lone District

JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA

BACOLOD CITY

Lone District

MONICO O. PUENTEVELLA

BAGUIO CITY

Lone District

MAURICIO G. DOMOGAN

BASILAN (with the city of Isabela)

Lone District

GERRY A. SALAPUDDIN

BATAAN (with the city of Balanga)

First District

ANTONINO P. ROMAN

Second District

ALBERT S. GARCIA

BATANES

Lone District

HENEDINA R. ABAD

BATANGAS (with the cities of Batangas, Lipa and Tanauan)

First District

EILEEN ERMITA-BUHAIN *

Second District

HERMILANDO I. MANDANAS

Third District

VICTORIA HERNANDEZ REYES

Fourth District

OSCAR L. GOZOS

BENGUET

Lone District

SAMUEL M. DANGWA ***

BILIRAN

Lone District

GERARDO J. ESPINA JR.

BOHOL (with the city of Tagbilaran)

First District

EDGAR M. CHATTO

Second District

ROBERTO C. CAJES

Third District

ELADIO "BOY" JALA

BUKIDNON (with the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia)

First District

J.R. NEREUS O. ACOSTA

Second District

TEOFISTO DL. GUINGONA III

Third District

JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI

BULACAN (with the city of Meycauayan)

First District

WILHELMINO M. SY-ALVARADO

Second District

PEDRO M. PANCHO

Third District

LORNA C. SILVERIO

Fourth District

REYLINA "NENENG" G. NICOLAS

CAGAYAN (with the city of Tuguegarao)

First District

JACK ENRILE

Second District

FLORENCIO L. VARGAS

Third District

MANUEL N. MAMBA

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

Lone District

CONSTANTINO G. JARAULA

CALOOCAN CITY

First District

OSCAR G. MALAPITAN

Second District

LUIS A. ASISTIO *

CAMARINES NORTE

Lone District

RENATO J. UNICO JR.

CAMARINES SUR (with the cities of Naga and Iriga)

First District

ROLANDO G. ANDAYA JR.

Second District

LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

Third District

ARNULFO P. FUENTEBELLA ***

Fourth District

FELIX R. ALFELOR JR.

CAMIGUIN

Lone District

JURDIN JESUS M. ROMUALDO

CAPIZ (with Roxas City)

First District

RODRIGUEZ D. DADIVAS

Second District

FRED H. CASTRO

CATANDUANES

Lone District

JOSEPH A. SANTIAGO

CAVITE (with the cities of Tagaytay, Cavite and Trece Martirez)

First District

JOSEPH EMILIO A. ABAYA

Second District

GILBERT C. REMULLA

Third District

JESUS CRISPIN C. REMULLA

CEBU (with the cities of Danao, Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue, Toledo & Talisay)

First District

EDUARDO R. GULLAS

Second District

SIMEON L. KINTANAR

Third District

ANTONIO P. YAPHA JR.

Fourth District

CLAVEL A. MARTINEZ

Fifth District

JOSEPH "ACE" H. DURANO

Sixth District

NERISSA CORAZON SOON-RUIZ

CEBU CITY

First District

RAUL V. DEL MAR

Second District

ANTONIO V. CUENCO

COMPOSTELA VALLEY

First District

MANUEL "WAY KURAT" E. ZAMORA

Second District

PROSPERO S. AMATONG

DAVAO CITY

First District

PROSPERO C. NOGRALES

Second District

VINCENT J. GARCIA

Third District

RUY ELIAS C. LOPEZ *

DAVAO DEL NORTE (with the cities Tagum, Panabo and Is. Garden City of Samal)

First District

ARREL R. OLAÑO

Second District

ANTONIO R. FLOIRENDO JR.

DAVAO DEL SUR (with the city of Digos)

First District

DOUGLAS RA. CAGAS

Second District

CLAUDE P. BAUTISTA

DAVAO ORIENTAL

First District

CORAZON N. MALANYAON

Second District

J. MAYO Z. ALMARIO

EASTERN SAMAR

Lone District

MARCELINO C. LIBANAN

GUIMARAS

Lone District

EDGAR T. ESPINOSA

IFUGAO

Lone District

SOLOMON R. CHUNGALAO

ILOCOS NORTE (with the city of Laoag)

First District

ROQUE R. ABLAN JR.

Second District

IMEE R. MARCOS

ILOCOS SUR (with the cities of Vigan and Candon)

First District

SALACNIB F. BATERINA

Second District

ERIC D. SINGSON

ILOILO (with the City of Passi)

First District

JANETTE L. GARIN *

Second District

JUDY J. SYJUCO

Third District

ARTHUR D. DEFENSOR

Fourth District

FERJENEL G. BIRON

Fifth District

ROLEX T. SUPLICO

ILOILO CITY

Lone District

RAUL T. GONZALEZ JR.

ISABELA (with the cities of Santiago and Cauayan)

First District

RODOLFO T. ALBANO III

Second District

EDWIN C. UY

Third District

FAUSTINO "BOJIE" G. DY III

Fourth District

ANTHONY C. MIRANDA

KALINGA

Lone District

LAURENCE B. WACNANG

LAGUNA (with the cities of San Pablo and Calamba)

First District

ULIRAN T. JOAQUIN

Second District

JUSTIN MARC SB. CHIPECO

Third District

DANTON Q. BUESER

Fourth District

BENJAMIN C. AGARAO JR.

LANAO DEL NORTE (with the City of Iligan)

First District

ALIPIO "TIKBONG" V. BADELLES

Second District

ABDULLAH D. DIMAPORO

LANAO DEL SUR (with the city of Marawi)

First District

FAYSAH MANIRI-RACMAN DUMARPA

Second District

BENASING O. MACARAMBON JR.

LAS PIÑAS CITY

Lone District

CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

LA UNION (with the city of San Fernando)

First District

MANUEL C. ORTEGA

Second District

TOMAS M. DUMPIT

LEYTE (with the cities of Tacloban & Ormoc)

First District

REMEDIOS L. PETILLA

Second District

TRINIDAD "EBBIE" G. APOSTOL

Third District

EDUARDO K. VELOSO

Fourth District

EUFROCINO M. CODILLA JR.

Fifth District

CARMEN L. CARI

MAGUINDANAO (with the city of Cotabato)

First District

BAI SENDIG G. DILANGALEN

Second District

SIMEON A. DATUMANONG

MAKATI CITY

First District

TEODORO L. LOCSIN JR.

Second District

AGAPITO A. AQUINO

MALABON CITY/NAVOTAS

Lone District

FEDERICO S. SANDOVAL II *

MANDALUYONG CITY

Lone District

BENJAMIN C. ABALOS JR.

MANILA CITY

First District

ERNESTO "BANZAI" NIEVA

Second District

JAIME C. LOPEZ

Third District

MILES M. ROCES *

Fourth District

RODOLFO C. BACANI *

Fifth District

JOEY D. HIZON

Sixth District

BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE JR.

MARIKINA CITY

Lone District

DEL R. DE GUZMAN

MARINDUQUE

Lone District

EDMUND O. REYES

MASBATE (with the city of Masbate)

First District

NARCISO R. BRAVO JR.

Second District

EMILIO R. ESPINOSA JR.

Third District

RIZALINA C. SEACHON-LANETE

MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL (with the cities of Oroquieta, Ozamiz and Tangub)

First District

ERNIE DULALAS CLARETE ***

Second District

HERMINIA M. RAMIRO

MISAMIS ORIENTAL (with the city of Gingoog)

First District

DANILO P. LAGBAS

Second District

AUGUSTO H. BACULIO *

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

Lone District

VICTOR S. DOMINGUEZ

MUNTINLUPA CITY

Lone District

ROZZANO RUFINO B. BIAZON

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL (with the cities of San Carlos, Cadiz, Bago, La Carlota, Silay, Kabankalan, Sagay, Victorias, Escalante, Sipalay and Himamaylan)

First District

TRANQUILINO B. CARMONA

Second District

ALFREDO D. MARAÑON III

Third District

JOSE CARLOS V. LACSON

Fourth District

CARLOS O. COJUANGCO ***

Fifth District

IGGY T. ARROYO

Sixth District

GENARO RAFAEL K. ALVAREZ III

NEGROS ORIENTAL (with the cities of Bais, Canlaon, Dumaguete, Bayawan and Tanjay)

First District

JACINTO V. PARAS

Second District

EMILIO C. MACIAS II

Third District

HERMINIO G. TEVES

NORTH COTABATO (with the city of Kidapawan)

First District

EMMYLOU J. TALIÑO-SANTOS

Second District

GREGORIO T. IPONG

NORTHERN SAMAR

First District

HARLIN CAST. ABAYON

Second District

ROMUALDO T. VICENCIO

NUEVA ECIJA (with the cities of Cabanatuan, Palayan, San Jose, Gapan and Science City of Muñoz)

First District

JOSEFINA M. JOSON

Second District

ELEUTERIO R. VIOLAGO ***

Third District

AURELIO M. UMALI

Fourth District

RODOLFO W. ANTONINO

NUEVA VIZCAYA

Lone District

RODOLFO Q. AGBAYANI

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

Lone District

MA. AMELITA C. VILLAROSA *

ORIENTAL MINDORO (with the city of Calapan)

First District

RODOLFO G. VALENCIA

Second District

ALFONSO V. UMALI JR.

PALAWAN (with the city of Puerto Princesa)

First District

ANTONIO C. ALVAREZ

Second District

ABRAHAM KAHLIL B. MITRA

PAMPANGA (with the cities of Angeles & San Fernando)

First District

FRANCIS "BLUEBOY" L. NEPOMUCENO

Second District

JUAN MIGUEL M. ARROYO

Third District

DR. REY B. AQUINO

Fourth District

ANNA YORK P. BONDOC, M.D.

PANGASINAN (with the cities of Dagupan, San Carlos, Urdaneta and Alaminos)

First District

ARTHUR F. CELESTE

Second District

AMADO T. ESPINO JR.

Third District

GENEROSO DC. TULAGAN

Fourth District

JOSE DE VENECIA JR.

Fifth District

MARK O. COJUANGCO

Sixth District

CONRADO M. ESTRELLA III

PARAÑAQUE CITY

First District

EDUARDO C. ZIALCITA

Second District

ROILO GOLEZ

PASAY CITY

Lone District

CONSUELO A. DY

PASIG CITY

Lone District

ROBERT VINCENT JUDE B. JAWORSKI

QUEZON (with the city of Lucena)

First District

RAFAEL P. NANTES

Second District

PROCESO J. ALCALA

Third District

DANILO E. SUAREZ

Fourth District

LORENZO R. TAÑADA III

QUEZON CITY

First District

VINCENT P. CRISOLOGO

Second District

MARY ANN L. SUSANO

Third District

MATIAS V. DEFENSOR JR.

Fourth District

NANETTE CASTELO DAZA

QUIRINO

Lone District

JUNIE E. CUA

RIZAL (with the city of Antipolo)

First District

MICHAEL JOHN "JACK" R. DUAVIT

Second District

ISIDRO S. RODRIGUEZ JR.

ROMBLON

Lone District

EDUARDO C. FIRMALO

WESTERN SAMAR (with the city of Calbayog)

First District

REYNALDO S. UY

Second District

CATALINO V. FIGUEROA

SAN JOSE DEL MONTE

Lone District

EDUARDO V. ROQUERO, M.D.

SAN JUAN

Lone District

RONALDO B. ZAMORA

SARANGANI

Lone District

ERWIN L. CHIONGBIAN

SIQUIJOR

Lone District

ORLANDO A. FUA JR.

SORSOGON (with the city of Sorsogon)

First District

FRANCIS G. ESCUDERO

Second District

JOSE G. SOLIS

SOUTH COTABATO (with the cities of General Santos & Koronadal)

First District

DARLENE R. ANTONINO-CUSTODIO

Second District

ARTHUR "DODO" Y. PINGOY JR., M.D.

SOUTHERN LEYTE (with the city of Maasin)

Lone District

ROGER G. MERCADO

SULTAN KUDARAT (with the city of Tacurong)

Lone District

SUHARTO T. MANGUDADATU

SULU

First District

HUSSIN U. AMIN

Second District

MUNIR M. ARBISON

SURIGAO DEL NORTE (with the city of Surigao)

First District

GLEND A. ECLEO *

Second District

ACE S. BARBERS

SURIGAO DEL SUR (with the city of Bislig)

First District

PROSPERO A. PICHAY JR.

Second District

PETER PAUL JED C. FALCON

TAGUIG/PATEROS

Lone District

ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO

TARLAC (with the city of Tarlac)

First District

GILBERTO C. TEODORO JR. **

Second District

BENIGNO S. AQUINO III

Third District

JESLI A. LAPUS

TAWI-TAWI

Lone District

ANUAR J. ABUBAKAR

VALENZUELA CITY

First District

JOSE EMMANUEL L. CARLOS

Second District

ANTONIO M. SERAPIO

ZAMBALES (with the city of Olongapo)

First District

MA. MILAGROS "MITOS" H. MAGSAYSAY

Second District

ANTONIO M. DIAZ

ZAMBOANGA CITY

Lone District

ERICO BASILIO A. FABIAN

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE (with the cities of Dapitan and Dipolog)

First District

CECILIA G. JALOSJOS-CARREON

Second District

ROSELLER L. BARINAGA

Third District

CESAR G. JALOSJOS

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR (with the city of Pagadian)

First District

ISIDORO E. REAL JR.

Second District

ANTONIO H. CERILLES

ZAMBOANGA-SIBUGAY

Lone District

BELMA A. CABILAO

PARTY-LIST

AKBAYAN! CITIZEN'S ACTION PARTY (AKBAYAN)

MARIO JOYO AGUJA
ANA THERESA HONTIVEROS-BARAQUEL
LORETTA ANN P. ROSALES

ALAGAD

RODANTE D. MARCOLETA
ANG LABAN NG INDIGINONG FILIPINO (ALIF)
ACMAD M. TOMAWIS

ANAK MINDANAO (AMIN)

MUJIV S. HATAMAN ***

ANAKPAWIS

CRISPIN B. BELTRAN
RAFAEL V. MARIANO

AN WARAY

FLORENCIO GABRIEL G. NOEL

ASSOCIATION OF PHILIPPINE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES (APEC)

ERNESTO DELA CRUZ PABLO
SUNNY ROSE A. MADAMBA
EDGAR L. VALDEZ

ALLIANCE OF VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS (AVE)

EULOGIO "AMANG" R. MAGSAYSAY, PH.D.

BAYAN MUNA

TEODORO A. CASIÑO
SATUR C. OCAMPO
JOEL G. VIRADOR

BUHAY HAYAAN YUMABONG (BUHAY)

CHRISTIAN M. SEÑERES
RENE M. VELARDE

BUTIL FARMERS PARTY (BUTIL)

BENJAMIN A. CRUZ

CITIZEN'S BATTLE AGAINST CORRUPTION (CIBAC)

EMMANUEL JOEL J. VILLANUEVA

COOPERATIVE NATCCO NETWORK PARTY (COOP NATCCO)

GUILLERMO P. CUA

GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY (GABRIELA)

LIZA L. MAZA

PARTIDO NG MANGGAGAWA (PM)

RENATO B. MAGTUBO

VETERANS FREEDOM PARTY (VFP)

ERNESTO S. GIDAYA

With 220 Members responding to the Call, the Presiding Officer declared the presence of a quorum.

Whereupon, for the purpose of orderly parliamentary proceedings, the Presiding Officer thereafter designated Representative Prospero C. Nograles as the Acting Majority Leader.

MOTION OF REP. NOGRALES

In accordance with the Order of Business, Rep. Nograles moved for the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. There being no objection, the Body approved the same.

Thereupon, Rep. Nograles informed the Body that nominations for the position of the Speaker of House of Representatives were now in order.

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Body recognized Rep. Juan Miguel M. Arroyo for his nomination speech.

NOMINATION SPEECH
OF REP. ARROYO (J.)

Rep. Arroyo stated that it was an honor to nominate the most worthy Member of

Congress to lead the Chamber in the Thirteenth Congress. He added that no other man or woman possesses the time-tested skills and wealth of experience of his nominee in building consensus among diverse groups and in achieving legislative goals amidst distraction.

If history is written by leaders, and not randomly dictated by events, Rep. Arroyo explained that his esteemed nominee looms larger-than-life in the annals of Congress. This, he stressed, because this colleague had led the House of Representatives through three remarkable terms and through times of national prosperity and national crisis. Moreover, he said that his nominee for Speaker has the great vision of what the Thirteenth Congress can achieve, as he recalled that distinguished Filipinos, patriots and freedom lovers had led the House to eminence through various times of the country's history.

Rep. Arroyo further stated that his nominee is a dreamer not only of great infrastructure projects for the country, but also of political reforms -- of strengthening the political parties as a prelude to a shift to a parliamentary form of government. More importantly, he stated that his nominee is a statesman, unequalled in stature in Congress and has led 41 parliaments in Asia in seeking a hundred years of peace for Asia and a no-nonsense campaign against poverty and terrorism in the region.

Rep. Arroyo likewise explained that his esteemed nominee had worked hard for peace with insurgent groups and had pushed for reform legislation using his skills as a vaunted coalition-maker and consensus-builder. Further, this esteemed colleague, he pointed out, had helped bring about a stable majority in the House in each of his three terms as Speaker, having forged the so-called "Rainbow" and "Sunshine" coalitions -- historic feats of political negotiating.

Thereupon, Rep. Arroyo maintained that this esteemed colleague has mastery of the legislative machinery that had produced landmark laws to stimulate economic growth, attract new investments, and build new infrastructure at no cost to the government. He pointed out that in his nominee's first and second terms as Speaker, he had helped turn power around a dormant economy and averted a crippling power crisis. He further stated that his esteemed nominee had stood by his decisions and lived by his convictions as he recalled that in the impeachment case against the Chief Justice in October and November 2003, his esteemed nominee had risked his post in the process of upholding the rule of law. Moreover, he said that his nominee had averted a constitutional crisis and kept the democratic foundations of government intact.

Whereupon, Rep. Arroyo underscored that these actuations are the hallmarks of courage and character, of a man truly worthy of being called the first among equals. He added that courage is what the country needs as it grapples with difficult challenges clamoring for immediate attention.

He stressed that the Members should steer the nation away from financial distress and protect their compatriots risking their lives abroad while keeping their allies in a world at war with terrorism.

Rep. Arroyo further cited the need to reform the country's system of governance by rejecting waste, corruption and paralysis, based on the lessons they have learned. He also said that they have to improve investment conditions nationwide to create jobs and fuel activity in vital industries.

Whereupon, Rep. Arroyo maintained that the Administration needs a strong and decisive leader in Congress to help turn all of its aspirations into reality. He stated that no other man fits the mold better than the one who has led the House through three remarkable terms, the last being the recently-concluded Twelfth Congress.

In closing, Rep. Arroyo expressed his honor in nominating Rep. Jose De Venecia Jr. of the Fourth District of Pangasinan to be the Speaker of the Thirteenth Congress.

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Iggy T. Arroyo to second the nomination of Rep. De Venecia.

SECONDING NOMINATION REMARKS
OF REP. ARROYO (I.)

Rep. Arroyo seconded the motion of Rep. Arroyo (J.) and expressed his full support to the nomination of Rep. De Venecia as Speaker of the House.

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Simeon A. Datumanong for his speech seconding the nomination of Rep. De Venecia as Speaker of the House.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH
OF REP. DATUMANONG

Initially, Rep. Datumanong manifested his honor in expressing again his admiration for the man whose leadership and political ingenuity has brought achievements not only to the Congress of the Philippines, but to the government and country as a whole. He recalled that when he participated in the nomination of Rep. De Venecia to the speakership of the Ninth Congress some 12 years ago, he was inspired by the latter's many achievements both government and in his private capacity. He said that he knows Rep. De Venecia well because they were both Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) awardees in 1974, the latter in the field of business and he, in public administration. He however disclosed that in reality, Rep. De Venecia was a very successful businessman, a construction executive who ventured in the Middle East when there was yet no diplomatic relations between the Philippines and some of the countries where his company operated. He claimed that Rep. De Venecia's initiatives were important factors in the establishment of diplomatic ties with many Middle East nations.

Rep. Datumanong maintained that Rep. De Venecia's leadership of the Ninth Congress and later, the Tenth Congress, produced for the country many significant measures for economic recovery and for the political stability of the nation, including the repeal of the Anti-Communist Act and the granting of amnesty that facilitated the return to government of many of those who opposed the administration.

As one of the Representatives of Mindanao, Rep. Datumanong manifested that he can state, in behalf of the people of Mindanao, Christians and Muslims, and other cultural communities alike, that Rep. De Venecia has been so dedicated and committed to the people of Mindanao. He revealed that the nominee is a devoted Christian and Catholic, but he looks after the welfare of Muslim Mindanao and treats the Muslims as his own brothers. He said that Rep. De Venecia took the lead role in forging peace with the Moro National Liberation Front in 1992 and with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 1998. He added that Rep. De Venecia was the first and highest political leader to visit Camp Abubakar in the mountains of Central Mindanao, thus bringing peace and economic initiatives that would benefit both Muslims and Christians. He regarded Rep. De Venecia as one of the shining hopes of Mindanao, adding that the Mindanaoans look up to him for the realization of their dream to see Mindanao truly graduate from a land of promise to a land of fulfillment.

Furthermore, Rep. Datumanong recalled that during the Twelfth Congress, Rep. De Venecia exhibited his statesmanship as exemplified during the crisis brought about by the proposed impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. He pointed out that Rep. De Venecia made a big decision, guided only by his conscience and the national interest, in upholding the decision of a coequal body of government. In doing so, he continued, Rep. De Venecia was able to convince different parties to transcend their political issues and interest, and thereby concentrate on preserving the national order.

For the foregoing reasons and more, Rep. Datumanong expressed his honor in seconding the nomination of Rep. De Venecia to be the Speaker of the House in the Thirteenth Congress.

Whereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Constantino G. Jaraula for his speech seconding the nomination of Rep. De Venecia.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH
OF REP. JARAULA

At the outset, Rep. Jaraula said that in this highly professionalized realm of government and politics, the Members are privileged to have a dominant personality, distinguished by sterling qualities, a consummate politician, brilliant, competent, dedicated and idealistic -- an idealism that is tempered by practicality and ideas that mostly are ahead of his times. He maintained that the nominee is a thinker and visionary who digs deep into the hearts and minds of his countrymen and comes up with enviable programs for government and society leading towards peace and prosperity. He claimed that Rep. De Venecia can very well serve as the brains of any administration.

He pointed out that Rep. De Venecia is a keen student of history and world affairs, who can dish out facts, events and perspectives as easily and readily as he can recite the major achievements of the Ninth, Tenth and Twelfth Congresses which he presided as Speaker. He regarded the nominee as a diplomat par excellence, who has graciously traveled the avenues of international diplomacy, as much as he has traveled the avenues of Metro Manila and the 7,100 islands of the archipelago. He said that Rep. De Venecia is widely known and regarded by foreign diplomats and world leaders.

Moreover, Rep. Jaraula stated that Rep. De Venecia is a leader of men, brave and compassionate, patient and persevering, who can smile in the face of adversity, form grand coalitions of parties and men, strike an effective compromise, and still exude humility in victory.

Rep. Jaraula then took pride in seconding the nomination of Rep. De Venecia to an unprecedented fourth term as Speaker of the House.

On motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Conrado M. Estrella III for his seconding nomination speech.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH
OF REP. ESTRELLA

Rep. Estrella expressed his honor and privilege to stand before his colleagues to nominate as Speaker of the House the man who has ably steered the Chamber during his previous three terms in the same position, even amidst turbulent times. He explained that he was seconding the nomination not because they are provincemates but simply out of his firm conviction that Rep. De Venecia is the man best suited for the job.

To the Members who have been reelected, he said that it would not be easy to forget that it is because of Rep. De Venecia's statesmanship that many landmark reform laws, which are presently reshaping the country's economy, politics and the whole nation as well, have been passed. He then cited examples of these successful economic and social legislative initiatives.

Rep. Estrella maintained that aside from Rep. De Venecia's substantial contribution in the legislative arena, the latter's expertise in consensus building gave birth to the "Rainbow," and later "Sunshine Coalitions," a conglomeration of various lawmakers with different political persuasions which ensured the passage of other equally important laws. He said that this man's diplomatic skills had a profound effect on the gains that they have attained through the years on the matter of bringing peace to the country. He stressed that never before is the House of Representatives faced with the challenge of playing a vital role in the development of the country by passing meaningful legislation that will hasten economic recovery.

Rep. Estrella opined that now that the country is facing the possibility of having a

full-blown fiscal crisis, they need a man who is not only equipped with experience but also with an endless reserve of patience to deal with the multifarious problems besetting the country. He stated that they need a man with a vision in view of the steady rise of the public sector debt and public sector deficits. He regarded Rep. De Venecia's double-barreled proposal to raise public revenue through revenue reform initiatives in the House and to initiate legislation that will encourage the creation of new wealth, as the most viable solution to the problem. With the seemingly endless bickering in their midst, he underscored that they need a man who has the experience in conflict management and consensus building.

In view of the foregoing reasons, Rep. Estrella seconded the nomination of Rep. De Venecia to the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Thereafter, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Junnie E. Cua to second the nomination of Rep. De Venecia.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. CUA

In seconding the nomination of Rep. De Venecia as Speaker of the House, Rep. Cua said that his colleagues have explained convincingly that the Filipinos need the former to lead the Thirteenth Congress. He pointed out that Rep. De Venecia's pioneering vision and unifying leadership has made the House a renowned institution. He stated that the House of Representatives under Rep. De Venecia's leadership can be likened to a well-oiled machine or a tireless workhorse, surpassing all previous Congresses in the number of bills passed based on easily verifiable statistics.

More importantly, Rep. Cua added, the House exceeded all expectations under Rep. De Venecia's watch, enacting much needed reforms in economic and political infrastructure that many thought could never be passed. With Rep. De Venecia's leadership, he said that the House was able to reach out to their countrymen because under his direction, the House had made a strong and deliberate effort to touch the lives of every Filipino, both here and abroad, through outstanding public relations, educating and informing the people on the work that they do in the House.

Rep. Cua also stated that the House was a bulwark of stability under Rep. De Venecia's watch, weathering political storms and thwarting enemies of the Constitution in their vain attempts to destabilize the nation's democracy. He believed that it was Rep. De Venecia's statesmanship and vast political experience in dealing with the intricacies of the branches of government that averted a serious constitutional crisis from taking place.

Rep. Cua then seconded the nomination of Rep. De Venecia to the speakership of the House because of the latter's innate wisdom and unparalleled work ethic, inspiring leadership and wealth of experience.

On motion of Rep. Nograles, the Chair recognized Rep. Raul V. Del Mar for his seconding nomination speech.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. DEL MAR

Initially, Rep. Del Mar said that more than anything else, the times call for a leader who can make today better than yesterday and tomorrow better than yesterday. He said that this man must have competence, courage and conviction; a leader with a positive way of thinking, combining dynamism and flexibility.

These qualities, he averred, are found in the person of the gentleman from the Fourth District of Pangasinan. He said that consensus building which is a tribute to this man is now an accepted imperative of positive government and coalition making, committing people representing different interests and ideas to a common purpose -- the best argument for democracy. He said that the man knew only too well that running a legislative assembly, a gathering of brilliant and practical minds, is not

done by ideal policies and prescriptions but dictated by practical needs and popular aspirations. Moreover, he said that this man knows how to "separate clouds from silver linings," how to balance benefits and burdens and knows that leadership in the face of articulate minds and competing ideas is largely an exercise in persuasion and projection of authority.

Rep. Del Mar said that there is therefore little wonder why this would now be his fourth term as Speaker of the House of Representatives, which makes him the longest serving Speaker since the First Congress in 1946.

Rep. Del Mar noted that some say that this man is easily given to "squandering superlatives," a leader so incapable of understatements, an expert in "all devices of ego nourishment." He however stressed that those who say this, not even with disdain, were "voices from the fringe." To many of the Members within and beyond the Assembly, he said that this is but one of his ways of expressing optimism about men and events. He however pointed out that the man has something that stirs people and rivets their attention and when he addresses doubts and misconceptions, he speaks with firmness and authority against elements who do not mean well and can be fiercely combative. He pointed out that if this man expresses a national need, people listen; if he says Congress is in trouble, legislators run to his side and if he presents a legislative program and explains it, he always prevails.

Rep. Del Mar said that the Cebuanos fondly recall the historic moment when this man took them through the turmoil in the impeachment case against their brother Cebuano -- Supreme Court Chief Justice Davide -- when he stood his ground, putting his political life on the line. He recalled that this man had ordered with full conviction that the decision of the Supreme Court must prevail, killing the impeachment move. He underscored that it was a sense of purpose most inspiring, toughness at its best, politics with principle at its finest.

Whereupon, Rep. Del Mar pointed out that in these difficult times -- emerging from an electoral battle well-fought -- the man stands firm in the "whirlwind of change" of which policies and politics are made up. He said that this man now has the deepest trust and confidence of the Executive because he had helped sustain its leadership and promote its programs of government. He said that the man has now the highest respect of the Judiciary because he had fought for its independence and integrity. Moreover, he said that the man has now the acknowledged imprimatur of civil society in pursuing programs of development. Indeed, he pointed out that there is no pride to match that of having a Speaker held in high esteem by government and society. With his leadership, he said that the Members look forward with certainty and confidence to the future of the institution.

On behalf of his colleagues from the Visayas, Rep. Del Mar said that he was privileged to second the nomination of Rep. Jose De Venecia Jr. as Speaker of the House.

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Presiding Officer recognized Rep. Edgar L. Valdez to second the nomination of Rep. De Venecia.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. VALDEZ

Initially, Rep. Valdez said that to be chosen among the Party-List Representatives to second the nomination of this statesman par excellence was indeed a rare privilege and honor bestowed on him.

Rep. Valdez said that he has found in this man a leader, a brother, and a father of all the Party-List Members in Congress. Moreover, he said that this man has protected the interests not only of their constituencies but also of the rights of the Party-List Members to have equal and genuine representation in the halls of Congress. Despite the problems that beset the Party-List groups, he pointed out that this man welcomed them as a brother and a father. He said that he had seen in this man the realization of the hopes and aspirations of 12.6 million marginalized and underrepresented sectors, including the rural poor in the countryside.

Rep. Valdez said that he was honored and privileged to second the nomination of Rep. Jose De Venecia Jr. as Speaker of the Thirteenth Congress.

Whereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, Rep. Anthony C. Miranda was recognized to second the nomination of Rep. De Venecia.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. MIRANDA

At the outset, Rep. Miranda said that his membership in the august Body was through the Lord's intercession, with blessings not given to everybody, that will equip one dedicated public servant with the authority he needs to enable him to be directly involved in the legislation of measures towards socio-economic development and nation building.

Whereupon, Rep. Miranda averred that it is an opportune time to oversee national plans and programs implemented by national and local government agencies in his district.

Rep. Miranda said that Speaker De Venecia meets local needs and preferences in accordance with the 10-point program of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The issue at hand, he said, is the leadership in the House. He then cited that Speaker De Venecia's 747 economic takeoff program towards sustained growth was designed to generate a seven-percent growth for seven years. He however explained that it was not a promotion of the herbal concoction of "pito-pito", but similarly, if the latter cures physical illnesses, the former is a medication of a sick Philippines. He added that the 747 program which is attuned with the 10-point agenda of President Macapagal-Arroyo, shall sum up into a 757, the fastest airbus the Filipinos could ride towards growth and development.

Rep. Miranda noted that these past few days, many words have been said-- some were hurtful-- but public servants should not be affected by such because those were just consequences of a stable democracy. In behalf of KAMPI, he said that he is honored to second the nomination of Honorable De Venecia, the better of the best Speakers the Congress has ever had, to be the Speaker of the Thirteenth Congress.

At this juncture, on motion of Rep. Nograles, Rep. Alan Peter S. Cayetano was recognized for his nomination speech.

NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. CAYETANO

At the outset, Rep. Cayetano thanked God for the opportunity to represent the Lone District of Taguig/Pateros and to serve the Filipino people for the third time. He said that he praises God that for every great problem, there is a solution; in every challenge, there is hope to overcome; and for great challenges and problems, there is a need for great leaders in the person of President Macapagal-Arroyo, in the Executive Department, and a great Chief Justice Davide for the Judicial Branch of government. He added that a Speaker of the House of the Filipino people is thus needed.

Rep. Cayetano said that the people need a Speaker, who, while being a peacemaker and a symbol of unity, will declare war on poverty, illiteracy, injustice and all forms of human sufferings, and should also be a pillar of moral regeneration in the country.

The question, Rep. Cayetano said, is how much the Members are willing to give up and how much they are willing to sacrifice to elect that kind of a Speaker.

Rep. Cayetano noted that in his first term as Congressman, he had been told to respect the seniority and traditions in the House. In his second term, he said that

the Members had been given a chance at leadership positions while during his third term -- third termers were expected to be on the top of the food chain and the one to take advantage for their constituents or for the country of the system that was put in place in the past.

Rep. Cayetano however inquired when the time for reform is and the time to listen to the people to have a House that they can be truly proud of, a House of Representatives that the public will love. Speaking in Filipino, he expressed wonder why people around the world love their Congressmen but hate Congress. He then recalled a joke from one of his constituents regarding the highly-publicized hostage-taking of Mr. Angelo dela Cruz, as follows: the hostage takers had taken hostage all Congressmen and had demanded P10 billion ransom from the President. The President asked the hostage-taker what he would do if ransom will not be paid. The hostage-taker replied that they will release them one by one. He noted that the listeners laughed at this joke while he did not, because he was a member of the Eleventh, Twelfth and now Thirteenth Congresses. He said that if he was already pained by the lawyer-jokes in the country and around the world, the Members do not deserve to take these jokes about Congress. He opined that the Members are in a position to do something about this. He said that the question, especially for the third-termers, is whether they are willing to give up these perks-- the chairmanship positions --that were promised to them in order to have a Speaker whose "Yes" is a "Yes" and "No" is a "No." A Speaker, who in the truest sense of the word, is the first among equals. He asked the Members whether they feel that they are all equal in the Chamber, and whether their districts are being treated equally. He disclosed that some were telling him to be practical and realistic.

Whereupon, Rep. Cayetano read a passage by former US President Richard Nixon who said that "Idealism without realism is impotent. Realism without idealism is immoral." He said that there are many progressive minds and hearts in Congress, whether they are Representatives of the districts or from the Party-List. He asked when the Members will have the opportunity to elect a Speaker who will represent the Members' true sentiments. He said that the opportunity is now before the time comes that they will have to regret their decision.

Whereupon, Rep. Cayetano appealed to the Members to make a stand and sacrifice for change. Although the Members support the President and want her to succeed because her success is the success of every Filipino, he pointed out that the Members cannot criticize the Executive and the Judicial branches and ask them to reform unless they themselves start reforming in their own backyard. He maintained that there are many wonderful ideas as far as congressional reforms are concerned but it has not been implemented or made its way in the Rules. He expressed hope that no matter who wins as Speaker, congressional reforms would be foremost in his list.

In ending his speech, Rep. Cayetano said that Congress needs a man of personal integrity, a man of respect, a man who can take on the job. As such, he nominated for the whole three years without term or time-sharing, Rep. Francis G. Escudero as Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Thirteenth Congress.

Whereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, Rep. Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva was recognized to second the nomination.

SECONDING NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. VILLANUEVA

Rep. Villanueva stated that as nominee of the Party-List Citizen's Battle Against Corruption (CIBAC), he was expected to banner the party's principle and echo its shibboleths of truth, justice and righteousness. He said that this expectation has proven not to be hard to fulfill since these principles were no different from his own.

Rep. Villanueva however pointed out that there were a number of times when details would get in the way and his personal opinions would have to be sidelined in lieu of the party's official stand on certain issues.

However, Rep. Villanueva said that as he stands before the Body to nominate the Speaker of the House, such disagreement finds no space.

Rep. Villanueva said that the Party-List CIBAC is for truth and there can be no truer person than the one who he will nominate. He stressed that CIBAC is for dynamic leadership and no one would doubt the dynamism of youth that his nominee would infuse into the Body. He maintained that CIBAC is for justice and righteousness and his nominee's record of fighting for justice and righteousness, despite the perils it brings, is of no question. He underscored that CIBAC is for meaningful reform, and homogeneity often brings with it stagnation and eventually decay. He said that the House of Representatives is not exempt from such reality.

Rep. Villanueva underscored that real change is needed in the House and that the Members need to explore new paths that can be opened up only by a new leadership. He added that they need to infuse new blood to the leadership of the House or they might stagnate or decompose.

Rep. Villanueva said that no other person is more fit for the job than the one he will nominate. He then seconded the motion to nominate Rep. Escudero as Speaker of the House.

At this juncture, on motion of Rep. Nograles, Rep. Agapito A. Aquino was recognized for his nomination speech.

NOMINATION SPEECH
OF REP. AQUINO (A.)

Rep. Aquino said that he is nominating a man who is not only qualified to be the Speaker of the House but probably more qualified to be the Minority Leader. Having been with the Opposition for the last three years, he said that the man's intellectual capacity is beyond doubt or debate.

Whereupon, Rep. Aquino cited his nominee's accomplishments as follows: he graduated magna cum laude in Political Science; magna cum laude in Law in the University of the Philippines; a valedictorian of his law class; and first place in the 1969 bar examinations, besting about 5,000 examinees on that year. He was an Assemblyman in the 1978 Batasang Pambansa.

He added that after the EDSA Revolution, this man was elected to the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Congresses, and that after taking a breather, was reelected again as a Member of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Congresses. His nominee had likewise served as Executive Secretary during the Estrada Administration, he said, although he left his post two weeks before President Estrada was removed from office.

Rep. Aquino further said that his nominee was the Majority Leader in the Eighth and Ninth Congresses, and was the Minority Leader in the Tenth Congress. Thus, he said that his nominee's experience in the debates and in floor stewardship was without equal in recent legislative history.

Thereupon, Rep. Aquino pointed out that he was referring to none other than Rep. Ronaldo B. Zamora of San Juan, Metro Manila, who is a man with a big heart and wide experience and who covers a lot of ground.

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Presiding Officer recognized Rep. Rolex T. Suplico to second the nomination.

SECONDING NOMINATION
speech of REP. SUPLICO

Rep. Suplico expressed honor in seconding the nomination of Rep. Zamora to the position of Speaker of the House. He then stated for the record that he was not entertaining any thought that Rep. Zamora will be the next Speaker, even as he maintained that the latter should be the next Minority Leader. This should be, he said, because in a field with three declared candidates, Rep. Zamora is the only

true-blooded Opposition candidate for the position of Minority Leader. He stressed that at this critical period in the nation's history, the House needs a Minority Leader who is independent, experienced, vocal, intelligent and fearless. For these reasons, Rep. Suplico reiterated his honor in seconding the nomination of Rep. Zamora for the position of Speaker as he expressed hope that the latter should be the next Minority Leader of the House.

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Presiding Officer recognized Rep. Juan Edgardo M. Angara to nominate another candidate for Speaker.

NOMINATION SPEECH OF REP. ANGARA

Rep. Angara nominated Rep. Jacinto V. Paras of the First District of Negros Oriental for the position of Speaker of the Thirteenth Congress. He claimed that Rep. Paras has shown himself to be a man of leadership and of competence, especially during the last Congress when he chaired the Committee on Transportation and Communications. In the short time that he has known Rep. Paras, he said that the latter had shown considerable leadership skills. Thus, he expressed belief that Rep. Paras will be able to work with all the Members in pursuing the reform agenda of the Speaker of the House.

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Presiding Officer recognized Rep. Joey D. Hizon to second the nomination.

SECONDING NOMINATION REMARKS OF REP. HIZON

Rep. Hizon seconded the nomination of Rep. Paras.

SECONDING NOMINATION remarks OF REP. FABIAN

Upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, Rep. Erico Basilio A. Fabian stated that he wished to take the opportunity to be part of the momentous activity in the Thirteenth Congress to second the nomination of Rep. Paras to the position of Speaker of the House.

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD FOR NOMINATIONS

Thereafter, there being no other nominations for the position of Speaker of the House, and there being no objection, the Presiding Officer motu proprio closed the period of nominations.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY OF REP. GOZOS

Rep. Oscar L. Gozos then inquired on the total membership of the House and how many Members constitute a majority.

The Chair replied that at present, there are 236 Members of the House and that 119 Members constitute a majority.

NOMINAL VOTING ON THE NOMINEES FOR SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Whereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Presiding Officer directed the Deputy Secretary General for Operations to call the Roll for nominal voting for the Speaker of the House and requested each Member to clearly state the name of the candidate he or she will vote for.

REMARKS OF REP. LAGMAN

Upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, Rep. Lagman made a clarification for the Journal of the proceedings. He said that by force of habit, and inclination and previous political affinity, his statement "This time, I support the Opposition," should read "This time, I support the Majority."

RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

For Rep. De Venecia:

Abad Bueser
Abalos Bulut
Abaya Cabilao
Abante Cagas
Abayon Cajés
Ablan Cari
Anuar Carlos
Acosta Carmona
Aguja Casiño
Albano Castelo-Daza
Alcala Castro
Alfelor Celeste
Almario Cerilles
Alvarez (A.) Chatto
Alvarez (G.) Chiongbian
Amante Chungalao
Amatong Codilla
Amin Cojuangco (M.)
Andaya Cua (G.)
Antonino (R.) Cua (J.)
Apostol Cuenco
Aquino (B.) Dadivas
Aquino (J.) Datumanong
Arbison De Guzman
Arroyo (I.) Defensor (A.)
Arroyo (J.) Defensor (M.)
Bacani Del Mar
Baculio Diaz
Badelles Dimaporo
Banaag Dominguez
Barbers Domogan
Barinaga Duavit
Baterina Dumarpa
Bautista Dumpit
Beltran Durano
Bersamin Dy (C.)
Biazon Dy (F.)
Biron Ecleo
Bondoc Ermita-Buhain
Bravo Espino
Espinosa (Edgar) Pancho
Espinosa (Emilio) Petilla
Estrella Pingoy
Falcon Puentevella
Floirendo Puno
Fua Ramiro
Garcia (A.) Real
Garcia (V.) Remulla (G.)
Gidaya Remulla (J.C.)
Golez Reyes (E.)
Gonzalez Reyes (V.)
Gozos Rocés

Gullas	Rodriguez	
Hontiveros-Baraquel		Roman
Imperial	Romualdo	
Ipong Roquero		
Jala Rosales		
Jalosjos	Salapuddin	
Jalosjos-Carreón	Salceda	
Jaraula	Sandoval	
Jaworski	Santiago	
Javier	Seachon-Lanete	
Joaquin	Señeres	
Joson Silverio		
Kintanar	Singson	
Lacson	Solis	
Lagman	Soon-Ruiz	
Lapus Suarez		
Libanan	Sumulong	
Locsin	Susano	
Lopez (J.)	Sy-Alvarado	
Macarambon	Syjuco	
Macias	Taliño-Santos	
Magsaysay (E.)	Tañada	
Magsaysay (M.)	Teves	
Malanyaon	Tomawis	
Mamba Tulagan		
Mandanas	Umali (Alfonso)	
Mangudadatu	Umali (Aurelio)	
Marañon	Unico	
Marcoleta	Uy (E.)	
Mariano	Uy (R.)	
Martinez	Valdez	
Maza Valencia		
Mercado	Vargas	
Miraflores	Velarde	
Miranda	Veloso	
Nantes	Vicencio	
Nepomuceno	Villafuerte	
Nicolas	Villar	
Nieva Villarosa		
Nograles	Virador	
Ocampo	Wacnang	
Olaño Yapha		
Ortega	Zamora (M.)	
Pablo Zialcita		
Zubiri		

For Rep. Escudero:

Antonino-Custudio	Malapitan
Asistio	Marcos
Cayetano	Plaza
Crisologo	Santiago
Firmalo	Serapio
Guingona	Villanueva
Lopez (R.E.)	

For Rep. Paras:

Agbayani	Espina
Angara	Fabian
Chipeco	Hizon
Enrile	Lagbas

For Rep. Zamora:

Aquino (A.) Magtubo
Dilangalen Noel
Figueroa Suplico
Garin

Abstentions:

Agarao Mitra
De Venecia Paras
Escudero Zamora (R.)

With 193 Members voting for Rep. De Venecia, 13 voting for Rep. Escudero, eight voting for Rep. Paras, seven voting for Rep. Zamora and six abstaining, the Presiding Officer declared Rep. De Venecia of the Fourth District of Pangasinan as the duly-elected Speaker of the House.

MOTION OF REP. NOGRALES

Upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, Rep. Nograles moved that the Body constitute a committee composed of the following Members to notify Rep. De Venecia of his election as Speaker of the House of Representatives and to escort the Speaker-elect to the rostrum for his oath-taking: Reps. Faysah Maniri-Racman Dumarpa, Amelita C. Villarosa, Cynthia A. Villar, Mary Ann L. Susano, Mauricio G. Domogan, Edgardo R. Gullas, Albert S. Garcia and Agapito A. Aquino.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER

There being no objection to the motion, the Presiding Officer requested the Members so named to inform the Speaker-elect of his election and to escort him to the rostrum.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

At this juncture, the Presiding Officer suspended the session at 12:26 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:27 p.m., the session was resumed.

Upon resumption of session, the Presiding Officer stated that upon the express wish of the Speaker-elect, the Gentleman from the Party-List representing CIBAC, Rep. Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva, will administer his oath of office.

Thereafter, the Presiding Officer requested Rep. Villanueva to come up to the rostrum and administer the oath of office to the Speaker-elect.

At this juncture, the family of Speaker De Venecia ascended the rostrum to witness the oath-taking.

Subsequently, the Presiding Officer requested the Members to rise for the oath-taking.

OATH-TAKING OF REP. DE VENECIA AS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

At this juncture, Rep. Villanueva administered the oath of office to the Honorable Jose De Venecia Jr. as Speaker of the House of Representatives in the presence of the members of his family and the Members of the House.

Whereupon, the Presiding Officer relinquished the Chair to Speaker De Venecia.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH
OF SPEAKER DE VENECIA

Initially, Speaker De Venecia stated that he would first read his statement before the Members of the House of Representatives are sworn in for their historic oath-taking pursuant to tradition and duty.

Thereafter, he said that his election as Speaker for the fourth time in postwar history was indeed an unprecedented honor for him. He added that he owed all the Members a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid, except by rededicating himself to the service of the House, in which he has spent so many memorable years and has made so many warm friendships.

He stated that the Thirteenth Congress is being opened at perhaps one of the most critical periods in the nation's history because the people are faced with a financial crisis, dramatized by a large budget deficit and a huge foreign-debt burden which is the most formidable problem facing the nation and facing the House, since appropriations and revenue measures emanate from the House and not in the Senate.

He also commented that the nation is faced with a long-running Communist insurgency and a Muslim secessionist rebellion, both of which remain unresolved despite the government's best efforts at peace-building. He also added that the people are faced with negative politics that has swept aside all norms of civility and disdained the virtue of dialogue and conciliation. Beyond them, he said, looming large are the nation's structural weaknesses that are choking the economy's growth and impeding its global competitiveness. He also pointed out that the people are saddled with so many burdens, with rapid population growth, mass poverty, low savings rate, inadequate rural development, slow diffusion of technology and outmoded infrastructure. These structural weaknesses, he said, is what the Thirteenth Congress must strive to remedy.

Whereupon, Speaker De Venecia said that as practicing politicians, they must acknowledge that ordinary people are more and more cynical about the country's politics because of excessive partisanship. He said that they must put an end to "politics-as-usual" and "business-as-usual" attitudes. He added that they must moderate fractional struggles for political power so that Congress can be united in the struggle to survive global competition. He stated that they can only begin to unite the nation if they themselves are united.

At this point, Speaker De Venecia said that in recent months, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and himself proposed a Government of National Unity motivated only by this objective. This Unity Government, he said, does not promise to be a cure-all but will enable government to focus, undistracted by partisan concerns, on reforming politics and governance, making the economy a more efficient creator of social wealth, thus improving the quality of life of the people.

Thereupon, he digressed on the organization of the 53 standing House committees and the allocation of chairmanships and vice chairmanships. He said that it is no easy task putting together seamlessly, so to speak, a mosaic of committee chairmanships, vice chairmanships and assignments. He added that they have gone to great lengths to consider all requests made by the Liberal Party, the Nationalist Peoples' Coalition, the Nacionalista Party, Kampi, PDP-Laban, the Social Democrats and the PDSP, the Party-List groups and the Lakas-CMD.

Unlike in the Senate, he said, where there are much more committees than senators available to chair them, the House has only 53 standing committees and about 140 second and third-termers, in a Chamber of 236 Members, vying for the chairmanship of each committee. He pointed out that many from the ranks are eminently qualified but there are only few House committees in which they could take positions of leadership. He said that he sympathizes with those who feel aggrieved because they feel left out and deprived.

He thereafter stated that as part of the tradition of the House, after the election of the Speaker, the organization of the various committees will proceed and that as tradition dictates, this has to be completed in the next seven to 10 days. In the face of contending positions, he added, one thing is certain and that is, that they shall give justice to every Member of the House.

Whereupon, Speaker De Venecia cited that as caretaker President for the past three years, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has, to some extent, been able to revive the country's economy devastated by a financial and then a political crisis. For instance, he said, over the first quarter, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had expanded by 6.4 % which is the best in 15 years, showing that the economy has vigor enough to regain its historical rate of growth. But then, he pointed out that, this growth is no longer enough. He pointed out that the people must surpass themselves if they are to wipe out poverty among them and catch up with vigorous neighbors in the world's fastest-growing region.

In this light, Speaker De Venecia stated that many urgent tasks await the Thirteenth Congress but added that beyond these urgent tasks, they must focus on three basic objectives, namely: 1) to strengthen the State capacity to improve government's ability to provide essential public services; invest in human capital and facilitate fair and efficient functioning of the market; 2) to stop once and for all the collusion, corruption and nepotism that are paralyzing the country's productive capacity; and 3) to begin the process of shifting to the unicameral parliamentary federal system that is now regarded as the best suited to the nation's stage of political development. He said that President Macapagal-Arroyo has been espousing and that the Majority and the Minority had made this a battle cry in the last elections.

Speaker De Venecia further stated that in most governments in Asia, with the exception of Indonesia and the Philippines, the form of government is parliamentary. The same is true, he said, with the governments of the whole of Europe, including France, which cannot be even considered an exception inasmuch as its government is both semi-presidential and semi-parliamentary.

Speaker De Venecia further proposed that the incoming Congress consider and pass the President's revenue measures, possibly in the next 100 days as a time-bound challenge to the Legislative Department. These measures, he stressed, will offset the deficit and finance the foreign exchange crisis. And if Congress would succeed in this objective, they will have every reason to propose a shift to a unicameral parliamentary federal system of government, he added.

Speaker De Venecia likewise proposed that the government should finally conclude the peace talks with MILF separatists and the National Democratic Front-Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (NDF-CPP-NPA) insurgents. He underscored that without political stability, the country will remain a nation divided against itself. He informed the Body that he had talked with Rep. Satur C. Ocampo and other leaders of the left in the House possibly to undertake a collective appeal to the leaders of the local insurgency based in the Netherlands to forge and bring about a final peace agreement at the soonest possible time. He likewise reiterated this appeal for peace with the Muslim Members in Congress to put an end to violence and bloodshed in Mindanao and other parts of the country.

In order to achieve this objective, Speaker De Venecia subsequently asked the Thirteenth Congress to give amnesty anew to all armed dissidents and provide "affirmative action" programs for Muslims and indigenous communities, including the marginalized sectors in the country. The overriding concern of the Thirteenth Congress, he said, should be to make the economy grow and eradicate poverty. Economic development, he opined, makes the best social welfare policy, considering that the poor benefit from growth as much as the rich.

Speaker De Venecia subsequently adverted to the experience of Malaysia in dealing with its insurgency problem. He noted that when Malaysia was able to lick its insurgency problem, it began to move forward and that it is now poised to achieve

First World status by the year 2020.

Speaker De Venecia further stated that Singapore, poorer than Cebu 40 years ago, has now achieved increased growth rates and a per capita income in excess of that of the United States, Japan and Switzerland. Thus, he pointed out that it is essential for the Members, regardless of party affiliation, religious belief and ideology, to help the President address and resolve these contentious issues to bring about peace in the Philippines.

Speaker De Venecia thereafter expounded on the issue of pork barrel, the use of which, had hounded both the Senate and the House of Representatives. He explained that if the Members will use their pork barrel entitlements to purchase computers for schools, help the President create 6 to 10 million jobs, create three million business and agricultural entrepreneurs, establish more classrooms, develop an educational curriculum focused towards Mathematics, English and Science subjects, build farm-to-market roads and post-harvest facilities, then Congress will be less vulnerable to public criticism. These specific programs to alleviate poverty and enhance economic development, he said, are in line with the President's 10-point action plan.

Speaker De Venecia thereafter maintained that it is the solemn task of the Members to help the President avert a threatening economic crisis since they are the President's full partners and allies in rebuilding the country. He added that the Members are loyal to the President and that they will mobilize their resources to support her 10-point program. He however stated that at the same time, the House of Representatives shall never be subservient and that it will not be a footstool of Malacañang.

In closing, Speaker De Venecia enjoined the Members to join hands and set aside passions of political partisanship and not be timid in spirit. He thereafter stated that it is for the Members to turn this hopeful beginning into a fountainhead of reforms. He then prayed that God give Congress endurance and encouragement and bless them with unity as they begin their work.

Speaker De Venecia subsequently declared the First Regular Session of the Thirteenth Congress open.

OATH-TAKING OF MEMBERS

At this juncture, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the Members proceeded with their oath-taking, with Speaker De Venecia officiating.

Whereupon, the Member of the House of Representatives took their oaths of office, with Speaker De Venecia administering the same.

ADOPTION OF THE HOUSE RULES

On motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body adopted the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twelfth Congress provisionally, to govern the initial sessions of the Thirteenth Congress until such time that the latter shall have approved its own Rules.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 38

On motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body considered House Resolution No. 38.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, to wit:

"RESOLUTION INFORMING THE SENATE THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN ORGANIZED AND HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS."

As copies of the Resolution had been distributed to the Members, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the text of the measure without prejudice to its insertion into the Record of the House.

ADOPTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 38

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body adopted House Resolution No. 38.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 39

On motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body considered House Resolution No. 39.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, to wit:

"RESOLUTION INFORMING HER EXCELLENCY, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS."

As copies of the Resolution had been distributed to the Members, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the text of the measure without prejudice to its insertion into the Record of the House.

ADOPTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 39

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body adopted House Resolution No. 39.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body considered House Concurrent Resolution No. 6.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, to wit:

"CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO HOLD A JOINT SESSION TO HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES."

ADOPTION OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body adopted House Concurrent Resolution No. 6.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body proceeded to the Reference of Business.

Upon direction of the Speaker, the acting Secretary General read the following Messages from the Senate which were consigned to the Archives.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated 26 July 2004 informing the House that the Senate adopted Senate Resolution No. 19 informing the House that the Senate has been organized and has entered upon the exercise of its functions.

TO THE ARCHIVES

Message dated 26 July 2004 informing the House of Representatives that the Senate concurred with House Concurrent Resolution No. 6.

TO THE ARCHIVES

Message dated 26 July 2004 informing the House that on even date, the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2 to which it requests the concurrence of the House

TO THE CALENDAR OF BUSINESS FOR THE DAY

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Thereupon, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body considered Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2.

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, to wit:

"CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CREATING A JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO NOTIFY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THAT CONGRESS, NOW CONVENED FOR ITS FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES, IS READY TO HEAR HER STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS IN A JOINT SESSION OF BOTH HOUSES."

ADOPTION OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Subsequently, on motion of Rep. Nograles, there being no objection, the Body adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO
THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON
THE NOTIFICATION

In view of the adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2, Rep. Nograles thereafter moved that the following Members be named to the aforementioned Joint Committee on Notification, to wit: Reps. Nanette Castelo Daza, Clavel A. Martinez, Henedina R. Abad, Consuelo A. Dy, Simeon A. Datumanong, Ernie Dulalas Clarete, Joseph "Ace" H. Durano and Juan Edgardo M. Angara.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

In order to give the Members of the Joint Committee time to perform their assigned tasks and until the House counterpart is ready to report back their work to the House, on motion of Rep. Nograles, the session was suspended.

It was 12:56 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:57 p.m., the session was resumed.

Upon resumption of session, Rep. Nograles informed the Members that the Body had already received a report from the Joint Committee that the President has already been informed that Congress will convene in Joint Session at four o'clock in the afternoon.

In this regard, Rep. Nograles informed the Members that they should be in the Session Hall one hour before the Joint Session of Congress at four o'clock in the afternoon. He thereafter moved to suspend the session until four o'clock in the

afternoon.

As a clarification, the Speaker reiterated that the Joint Session of Congress will be at four o'clock in the afternoon for the State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the President.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

With regard to the regular session, Speaker De Venecia declared the session adjourned until four o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 27, 2004.

It was 12:58 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

(Sgd.) ROBERTO P. NAZARENO
Secretary General

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Journal Service, Plenary Affairs Bureau
Philippine House of Representatives