



The

Saludo

Report

From the Office of Hon. Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr., Lone District, Southern Leyte

Odong distributes SARO

To reinvigorate livelihood development in the countryside, Congressman Odong Saludo released funds for the improvement of various infrastructure projects in the Province of Southern Leyte by distributing the Saludo Assistance Release Order (SARO) to barangay leaders, his counterpart of the Special Allotment Release Order given out by the national government.

Close to one hundred sixty (160) barangays from various municipalities received SAROs, which are expected to fund the completion of infrastructure projects identified through the resolutions submitted by barangay councils to the office of the solon.

By virtue of the SARO, infrastructure projects such as farm-to-market roads, bridges, multi-purpose buildings, school buildings, flood control and post harvest facilities would be finished. To facilitate the completion of the project and to show proof that funds are available, the SARO is to be presented to the Engineering District Office for validation.

Described as the most-coveted piece of paper among barangay officials, the SARO is a document that itemizes the project approved for funding, its amount, and the barangay where the request originated. The SARO cost variedly ranges from

(continued on page 6)



President Arroyo inks RA 8796 in the presence of Cong. Saludo and Maasin City Officials

GMA signs Maasin City holiday

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law House Bill 4374, which ratifies the declaration of August tenth of each year as a non-working public holiday in the City of Maasin, in a ceremony held at the State Dining Room in Malacañan Palace.

Cong. Odong Saludo, father and author of the cityhood of Maasin, said that the law gives emphasis to the significance of the historic evolution of Maasin City. By declaring the charter anniversary of Maasin City as a non-working holiday, Maasinhons would be given a rich opportunity to commemorate and enjoy the city's progress, he said.

Maasin City Mayor Damian Mercado also believes that the holiday would give the officials and all Maasinhons ample time to celebrate the rebirth of Maasin.

By virtue of RA8796, former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada signed into law the conversion of the Municipality of Maasin into the City of Maasin.

With an affirmative vote of 19,273, which is 93% of the total votes, the Maasinhons confirmed their overwhelming support to the development of the capital town of Southern Leyte on August 10, 2000 thereby converting the municipality of Maasin into the City of Maasin.

Dev't projects for Limasawa bared

In an effort to promote the Limasawa Island as a prime tourist destination and to boost trade and economic activities, Congressman Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr. secured a total amount of two million pesos from the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) for the construction of a jetty port in the said island municipality. Another P3million peso funding is being worked at as part of the initial phase of the development of the Limasawa port.

After months of negotiations, the Project Management Office of the DOTC finally approved the request of Saludo. "I am sure that the DOTC approved our request because they are convinced of the potentials and benefits in building a port in Limasawa", Saludo said.

The solon further assured his constituents in Limasawa of his continuing efforts to bring infrastructure projects to the municipality. He revealed that he has been meeting with top officials of the DOTC in the past months to ensure

that the projects he proposed for Limasawa are approved. "I am glad that all our efforts have paid off," Saludo intimated.

In addition, the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) is set to construct a police and tourist information counter with restroom in Limasawa, specifically at the site where the first holy mass in the country was celebrated. According to Saludo, the agency's engineers have already conducted ocular inspection and site preparation.

"Limasawa's development has long been ignored and it's about time that we give it the kind of attention due to it", Saludo said. He added that the funding of the concreting of barangay roads in barangays Triana, San Agustin, Magallanes, San Bernardo and Lugsongan and the construction of a drainage system in Barangay Cabulihan are already worked out.

P 500,000 was also allotted for the implementation of flood control projects in Barangays Triana and Cabulihan.

DBM releases P15M SARO for Agas-agas repair



The road that endangers motorists

The Department of Budget and Management approved the immediate release of P15M SARO (Special Allotment Release Order) for the repair of the Agas-agas Road.

This release came after Congressman Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr. had an emergency meeting with Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin to tackle the worsening conditions at the Agas-agas section of the Pan-Pacific highway in Sogod town.

Saludo urged the DBM to release the SARO in response to the persistent complaints by motorists that the road could be perilous especially when heavy rains pour.

Boncodin in an earlier meeting with Saludo promised this release after the solon explained the urgency to complete the repairs, otherwise, the initial releases

in the amount of P 7.5 M will all be for naught.

On the other hand, Saludo said that talks are still on-going for the repair of the San Miguel section to complete the rehabilitation efforts.

The Agas-agas Road, which is the road link to Mindanao, has been a perennial problem to motorists especially during the rainy season. Landslides are main occurrences which prompted Saludo to seek assistance from the government, paving way for the conceptualization of the 23rd Yen Package.

The 23rd Yen Package is an arterial road project financed by the Japanese government which is aimed to interconnect important road links in the country for efficient mobility.

Fight against crime reinforced

Congressman Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr. filed a bill that aims to strengthen the ability of the police to apprehend criminals and investigate criminal activities in the country.

According to Saludo, the incidence of crime in the country has alarmingly risen that there has been an urgent demand to equip the police with advanced facilities that will aid them in swiftly resolving cases filed before them.

"House Bill No. 1781 is geared to adopt advanced measures that will maintain an accurate national criminal record database for law enforcers by merging the information database of all law enforcement bodies", Saludo said.

"The existence of such database will enable the police to promptly track the investigation of criminal activities. With the introduction of appropriate technology, the criminal history records, samples of fingerprints, and the disposition of cases will be made readily accessible to the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

Odong pushes for Charter Change

Describing the supreme law of the land as faulty and obsolete, Congressman Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr. supported the initiative of the House of Representatives to reform the 1987 Constitution through a Constituent Assembly.

Speaking before the Rotary Club of Manila, Saludo said that it is important for the Constitution to be studied well to make it respond to the present needs of the country.

Saludo cited as legal monstrosities the inclusion of party-list elections, the multi-party systems, and the reelection bans in the present constitution.

Saludo said that the two-party system should be reinstated to restore the legitimate political parties, where the ability to count and principles matter.

The party-list representation, according to Saludo is also illogical. He explained that party-list representatives supposedly have national constituency, like senators, but they are dumped in the House of Representatives and are not even elected by their names, or by the sectors they are supposed to represent.

Saludo also stressed the importance of requiring academic qualifications when running for public office. He said that

residency and the ability to read and write are not enough to qualify a person to run for public office that require full understanding of governmental policies and systems.

In his speech, the solon also suggested the lifting of the term limit for elective officials. "I believe that this particu-



lar provision was inserted in reaction to the Marcos era which controlled the country for twenty years.

"However, three years is too short for any elected official to fully grasp the responsibilities that his position entails. Be-

fore he has even familiarized himself with the nature his job, the term is already over," Saludo said.

"In fact, this provision did not serve its purpose. When the officials are no longer eligible to run for office after they have exhausted three consecutive terms in the same position, they let their spouses or children run in their place. This practice has produced mediocre output," the solon observed.

He criticized the present election system by saying that the government has wasted too much resources because of the frequency of elections.

According to Saludo, the government cannot keep implementing a law that spawns flawed visions and continues to mire the nation in perpetual poverty and degradation.

"Now is the time to change our post-dictatorship transition charter. The Constitution of a nation is the continuing yardstick of a people's maturity, patriotism, and political will in the pursuit of freedom, justice and prosperity. It is therefore imperative that the Constitution is amended to make it more responsive to our people's needs", Saludo explained.

ODONG IN ACTION



Saludo hosts dinner for barangay captains in his residence in Makati City



Odong mingles with his constituents



Saludo hosts dinner in honor of Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo



Slamming the abolition of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in a press conference with Senator Rodolfo Biazon



With a Peruvian diplomat during the Indian Parliamentary Conference in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India in New Delhi



Saludo congratulates newly appointed officials of the Philippine Navy after successfully getting the approval of the Commission on Appointments



Odong hosts welcome luncheon for Jean Maraon, an OFW whom he helped repatriated after she was illegally recruited



Striking a pose with barangay officials from Hinunangan when they visited the House of Representatives



Odong during the medical mission he sponsored for indigents in Malitbog



Odong leads other members of the House of Representatives in filing a graft case against BIR's former commissioner



In an animated conversation with Senator Ping Lacson



Showing what unity means with Malitbog officials



With Speaker Jose De Venecia and Indian businessman Qureshi



Computer sets donated by various government agencies to public schools in Southern Leyte through the intercession of Cong. Saludo



Distributing the Saludo Assistance Release Order to a barangay official

ODONG VINDICATED

Prosecutor says People's Journal is libelous

The Office of the City Prosecutor found substantial evidence to pursue the libel complaint filed by Congressman Aniceto Saludo, Jr. against the People's Journal's publisher, editor-in-chief, and the writer of who authored the article that allegedly carried malicious imputations against Saludo.

In a 10-page resolution, Quezon City Prosecutor Claro Arellano stated that after carefully assessing the evidence presented by both parties, he finds existence of probable cause in the complaint filed by Saludo against People's Journal publisher Teodoro Berbano, editor-in-chief Benjamin Defensor and writer Tita Valderama.

The resolution stated that the article "Extorting for Text Giants" authored by Valderama, which was published in the September 5, 2001 issue of the said tabloid, was libelous. It averred that the said article was meant to convey that the complainant is a member of the so-called "Gang of Five" which received money from Smart and Globe in an attempt to slow down an inquiry into the telecommunications companies' reduction of free text credits of their subscribers.

"The article, especially the headline imputed disparaging qualities and impeach the good name, honesty, vir-

tue, credit and reputation of the complainant who is a public officer and is an offense actionable. The subject article is libelous because it imputes acts and circumstances that cause the dishonor, discredit and contempt of the complainant", the resolution said.

The resolution further countered that "the publication was not made in good faith because as admitted by Valderama, she submitted her article without first getting the side of the complainant. Such imputation was so malicious considering that the complainant is a member of the House of Representatives conducting investigations on anomalies and now being accused of extorting money."

Valderama earlier invoked her right not to reveal the source of her information as provided under RA 53 but the prosecutor argued against her by saying that "respondents cannot hide behind the claim that their article came from reliable sources. Anybody who wants to destroy the reputation of another can just say her/his information came from a very reliable source.

"Prudence dictates that an investigation should have been conducted by Valderama to verify the veracity of her information," the resolution further stated.

Learning about the resolution, Saludo said that he is vindicated.

Approval of Japan airline as flag carrier blocked

In a bid to quash attempts by a Japanese-controlled airline to continue operating as the Philippine flag carrier, Congressman Odong Saludo filed a resolution in the House of Representatives to investigate the alleged connivance among top government officials to conceal the truth in order to facilitate the approval of the airline's certificate to operate.

Through House Resolution 870, Saludo urged the House leadership to investigate into the alleged conspiracy of top government officials in facilitating the approval of CLA Air Transport Co. as the Philippine flag carrier and for possible violation of the Anti-dummy Law due to misrepresentation of the company's ownership.

Saludo said that officials from the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) and the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) have suppressed pertinent information about the real ownership of CLA Air Transport Co. which misled President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to approve said airline as the official flag carrier of the country.

According to Saludo, CLA has deliberately misrepresented its ownership by claiming that majority of its shares are owned by Filipino stockholders. Documents that Saludo was able to secure, however, prove that the CLA is owned 51 percent by Filipinos and 49 percent by Japanese investors, which violates the Constitutional provision specifically mandating a 60 percent ownership by Filipinos of any public utility.

Saludo revealed that most of the positions in the present CLA Board of Directors are held by Japanese, which in effect, give the control of the airline's operation to the Japanese and the Filipinos are being used only as dummies.

"The application of CLA Air Transport for the extension of its permit to operate has already been denied in 1999, precisely because of the problems arising from its ownership composition. I cannot imagine why, this time, it has been endorsed by officials from DOTC and CAB to Malacañang for approval", Saludo protested.

Unaware of the preconditions, President Arroyo has signed the extension of the CLA's certificate to operate, depriving other Filipino-owned airline companies of the right to fly as the official Filipino flag carrier.

"The endorsement of the CLA's certificate to operate to Malacañang and its consequent approval by the President constitutes a well-planned and executed conspiracy to circumvent the Constitution and a sell-out of the national interest," Saludo alleged.

Stronger support for abused women urged

In an effort to strengthen the government's program for abused women, Congressman Aniceto Saludo, Jr. filed in the House of Representatives a bill that will compel the government to give full attention to the plight of exploited women.

According to Saludo, the alarming incidence of crimes committed against women necessitates concrete action from the government to rehabilitate and give comfort to women who are victims of maltreatment. The establishment of rehabilitation centers in every congressional district for these troubled women will therefore be prioritized through the enactment of House Bill 419.

He explained that victims of sexual abuse and other forms of violence have no means to overcome their lifelong trauma and bring back to normal their shattered life. As the statistics on the victims of sexual abuses continue to increase, it is the duty of the government to assist its citizens who have been victims of

violent crimes, he added.

Saludo however acknowledged that the solution to the crimes committed against women could not be addressed overnight. He said that even with the measures undertaken both by the government and concerned citizens, the prevalence of violence committed against women would remain to be a major concern of the government for a period of time.

"What I am most concerned about now is the future of the victims and their family who already suffered a lot during and after those violent incidents. Victims of sexual abuses need more help from professionals and experts to contain the trauma they have suffered", Saludo stressed.

"Social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other medical professionals have to be mobilized in the rehabilitation of victims and more importantly in the prevention of abuses committed against women", Saludo emphasized.

Saludo represents Philippine Congress to India

Recognizing his expertise in international law, Congressman Aniceto G. Saludo, Jr. has been chosen to represent the Philippine Congress to India to attend the International Parliamentary Conference in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India on January 21 to 26.

Saludo has been designated by Speaker Jose De Venecia as the lone representative of the Philippine Congress to the said conference because of his vast knowledge on international cooperation.

The Speaker said that his choice is based on Saludo's track record, having had a long experience as an international lawyer.

The conference aims to bring together parliamentarians from all over the world to share their experiences, views and ideas in meeting present challenges of democratic nations/states. It is also the goal of the occasion to make the parliamentarians re-dedicate themselves to the cause of good governance and welfare of the people.

The said conference would be tackling vital global issues such as the role of the parliament in social change, combating terrorism, the need for

reforms for greater executive accountability, and the role of the parliament in the age of globalization and liberalization.



Cong. Saludo comfortably waits for the commencement of the International Parliamentary Conference in New Delhi, India

Sale of gov't shares in Petron, Meralco slammed

The proposed sale of government shares in Petron and Manila Electrical Co. (MERALCO) drew heavy flak from a leading member of the Administration party in the House of Representatives.

Representative Aniceto Saludo, Jr. said reported plans of the government to sell its 40% stake in Petron, one of the three major players in the petroleum industry, and its 20% share in Meralco, the power distribution monopoly in Luzon, are ill-advised, ill-timed and totally disadvantageous to the government and the Filipino people.

Saludo said Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho is the brain behind the fire sale of the country's stake in these two critical energy sector corporations. "Camacho like his unlamented prodigy - the ousted BIR chief Rene Bañez, are only good in creating a gargantuan budget deficit and aggravating the national debt." Saludo said.

Saludo explained that Secretary Camacho to fund the huge budget deficit has resorted to massive billion dollar borrowings and flotation of treasury and government bonds at high interest rates. Now, he wants to sell the few remaining crown jewels of the government at a loss."

Saludo explained that selling the Petron and MERALCO shares at a time when war jitters over the planned US attack on Iraq and the recent terror bombing in Davao had pulled down not only the country's stock market but the sharp drop in stock market trading in the major international bourses to record lows.

"This would be tantamount to undertaking a fire sale of the country's few remaining crown jewels." Saludo said.

In the case of MERALCO shares, Saludo said that the value of the power distribution firm's stocks have been pulled down by the recent ruling by the Supreme Court mandating a refund of P28 billion to all its customers as it ruled that the tax payments passed on to by MERALCO to its consumers was illegal.

He said selling such a huge chunk of MERALCO shares now would be financially disastrous to the government. It is obvious that Finance Secretary Camacho is "desperately seeking an instant solution to the budget deficit that could hit P300 billion."

Instead of selling out, Saludo said that the government should have a bigger say in MERALCO because it owns more shares than the Lopez family who only own 16 percent of the power distribution utility. Government by virtue of its stockholdings in MERALCO should seriously consider getting involved in policymaking and even in some operations that could be crucial in curbing reported abuses and exploitation of its consumers especially the runaway PPA charges, Saludo said.

"Selling now would only benefit those who are behind this devious plan especially after the MERALCO Board lifted a decades old rule prohibiting the sale of more than ten percent sales of its stocks to any one group or party. Both of these announcements are clearly related to a bigger play that could only be anti-public and detrimental to government interest," Saludo said.

Saludo expressed full, unconditional support to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez' position not to sell the government's 40 percent stake in Petron.

He said Energy Secretary Perez is correct in opposing the sale of Petron sale not only because of poor stock market conditions but because having a voice in the management of one of the three major oil industry players can significantly mitigate errant, and opportunistic price increases by the oil industry players.



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(Odong... from page 1)

P60,000 to P400,000 with a total amount of P32.5 million.

According to the congressman, the distribution of the SARO is an innovation that ensures the funding of barangay projects and aims to encourage barangay leaders to exert more effort in identifying priority projects that would greatly benefit Southern Leyteños in the rural areas.

Beneficiaries come from the Municipalities of Padre Burgos, Limasawa, Macrohon, Sogod, Libagon, San Juan, Anahawan, Liloan, San Francisco, St. Bernard, Bontoc, Hinunangan, San Ricardo, Pintuyan and Malitbog.

Among the projects funded through the initiatives of Saludo are construction/repair of farm to market roads, construction/concreting of barangay roads, construction of multi-purpose buildings (barangay halls, health centers, day care centers, senior citizen centers), construction/repair of water system, construction of irrigation system, and construction of flood control and drainage projects.

The Office of Saludo has been flocked with positive feedback since the project was launched. Resolutions requesting for funds for the completion of different projects from all over the province have since been swarming the office of Congressman Saludo.

"I am happy with the outcome of this project. The distribution of the SARO has become a very visible way of allocating funds for the numerous projects that our constituents need. Through the SARO, we have encouraged active participation of barangays in the execution of my development plans for the province," Saludo said.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, learning about Southern Leyte's counterpart of the SARO, acknowledged Saludo for his ingenuity in order to establish strong and productive partnership with the local leaders in his district.

Odong represents Phil Congress to Judicial Reform Forum

Speaker Jose De Venecia appointed Congressman Aniceto Saludo, Jr. to represent the House of Representatives in a round-table discussion aimed to reform the Judiciary initiated by Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr.

Having practiced his law profession for more than four decades, Saludo has been chosen as by De Venecia due to Saludo's extensive knowledge on the judiciary. The Speaker believes that Saludo is very competent to represent the lower chamber to such a very crucial discussion.

Saludo would participate in a brainstorming event where great minds are being gathered to design a report, which would recommend reform strategies to support the goal of strengthening the independence, accountability and efficiency of the judiciary.

Constantly aware of the many challenges to its efficient performance, the Supreme Court has initiated concrete steps to establish a strong foundation for the long-term development of the Judiciary. The Asian Development Bank has expressed full support to this endeavor and it has committed to provide technical assistance to help the Judiciary achieve tangible results.

The discussion is aimed primarily to strengthen the independence and define the accountability of the Judiciary in preparation for an action program for Judicial Reform. This consists of a wide-ranging and comprehensive set of reforms aimed at enhancing judicial conditions and performance for the improved delivery of judicial services.



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House of Representatives
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