

Comments on House Bills 3891 and 6131: “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES” authored by Congressman Francisco Benitez and Congressman Victor A. Yap, respectively.

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1. In line with the country’s commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Philippines has adopted the vision and international standards that adhere to the development of sustainable cities and communities. Thus, as a matter of policy, the objectives and aim of both bills are already embedded in the country’s development goals and policy frameworks.
2. The NEDA Ambisyon 2040 on infrastructure and urban development integrates the vision of sustainable cities in the Philippines Medium-term Development Plan and has identified the strategies (spatial and strategic frameworks) to consider in the development of sustainable cities.
3. Moreover, the Bureau of Philippine Standards of the Department of Trade and Industry has formulated a Technical Committee, which has been undertaking standardization activities related to attaining sustainable and resilient cities and communities. The standards being developed by the Technical Committee can be utilized as guidance for the urban renewal, development and rehabilitation of Philippine cities. In particular, these standards have been aligned with international standards (ISO) for sustainable cities and communities. The ISO standards specifically adapted by the Philippines and of relevance to the proposed bills are: (a) PNS 37100 Sustainable cities and communities vocabulary; (b) PNS 37104 Sustainable Cities and Communities- Guidance for Practical Local Implementation; (c) PNS 37120 Indicators for City Services and Quality of life; (d) PNS 37122 Indicators for SMART cities; (e) PNS 37123 Indicators for Resilient Cities.
4. Both the NEDA strategic frameworks and Philippine Standards for sustainable cities and communities can be referenced as the guiding framework or models for sustainable cities as mentioned in Sec 4 of HB 3891 and Sec 3 of HB 6131. Likewise, the indicators from UN Goal 11 as enumerated in Sec 4 of HB 6131 and Sec 5 of HB3891, can be supplemented by other indicators identified in Philippine Standards for quality of life, SMART cities and resilient cities.
5. In the light of the global pandemic, the goal of sustainable cities has become even more associated with the concept of SMART cities. It has been shown that technology and innovation are the main drivers to building resilience and

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efficiency in cities. Building resilience and efficiency require cities/LGUs to have the capability to monitor and control all aspects of the city environment. The development of city level data monitoring systems is a fundamental requirement for all cities/LGUs and should be highlighted in the proposed bills. Monitoring systems are the foundation of sustainable and smart cities and thus should be supported both in terms of policy and funding.