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If you need more information, please contact Ms. Seohee Yang (Program Advisor)
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Senate to work overtime to pass CARP bill

by AUREA CALICA
Philstar.com

MANILA – The Senate said it would work overtime to pass the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) extension bill and other measures before Congress goes on break on Wednesday.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said that the Senate would be able to approve the bills it needs to pass before the break.

Enrile said there would be no adjudicatory hearings on Senator Manny Villar's case during the break, and added that they would burn the midnight oil if needed to finish their legislative work.

He said the hearings were set only for tomorrow and June 4 so they could tackle proposed measures like the extension of the CARP.

Meanwhile, the Senate committee of the whole will proceed with tomorrow's full blown "trial" on the plunder and conflict of interest charges filed against Villar by Sen. Jamby Madrigal.

Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Madrigal said the Supreme Court (SC) did not stop the committee from conducting hearings but merely ordered the majority to answer the petition filed by Villar and the other minority members who were seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against the proceedings.

"There is no TRO and we were only asked to

answer on June 2, not necessarily to stop. So the hearings will continue," Estrada said.

Pending SC resolution of the issue, Sen. Joker Arroyo has asked the committee to defer the hearings.

But Madrigal said since the committee did not get any TRO, she would present her evidence against Villar tomorrow.

The adjudicatory hearings were set after the committee found the complaints against Villar substantial and must be heard.

"I will undergo direct examination by my lawyer so I can explain my complaint and the evidence I have. It's not really a trial but adjudicatory hearing," Madrigal said over radio station dwlZ.

Madrigal said she was preparing her complaint and evidence that would include more than 200 documents and more than 10 witnesses who could be subpoenaed by the committee.

She claimed her evidence against Villar was solid and strong, adding the majority was happy with the decision of the SC not to issue a TRO despite the petition of the minority.

"The ruling is in our favor, every lawyer knows that," Madrigal said.

Lacson said the trial should definitely push through and "anyone who says otherwise should go back to law school." ■

RP to send more women peacekeepers

by CYNTHIA BALANA
Inquirer.net

MANILA – The Philippines will deploy more women for the United Nations peacekeeping efforts given this year's UN theme of greater involvement by women

in peacekeeping missions, according to Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo.

"Filipino peacekeepers are recognized by the United Nations for their outstanding performance and tireless commitment to maintain global peace and security," Romulo said during the observance of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers at the Department of Foreign Affairs on Friday.

He assured the UN that women peacekeepers were at par with their male counterparts.

Earlier, scores of women leaders and activists trooped to the UN headquarters in New York to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the signing of a measure to increase women's involvement in peace and security issues. Resolution 1325 calls on member states to protect women in conflict and to bring more women into peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction.

They noted the lack of women in talks to end civil conflict, particularly in the talks to end the fighting in the western Sudanese province of Darfur, as well as in post-conflict situations.

Romulo also assured the UN of the government's continued

commitment to peacekeeping efforts worldwide.

"As we pay tribute to the noble sacrifices of all UN peacekeepers, we reaffirm our enduring and collective commitment to building world peace," he said.

Romulo said the celebration highlighted the Philippines' contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations as well as appreciation for UN peacekeepers efforts of Filipino soldiers and policemen.

"We especially honor all peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice of laying down their lives in the performance of their sacred duties," he added.

During the event, the Dag Hammarskjold Medal was presented to Immaculate Batalla, the widow of Philippine Army officer Lt. Col. Renerio Batalla who died of malaria in October 2008 while serving with the UN mission in Sudan.

The Dag Hammarskjold Medal is a posthumous award given to members of UN peacekeeping operations who lose their lives in the line of duty.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared May 29 of each year as the "International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in the Philippines." ■

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