

Health Secretary Duque passes CA scrutiny

The Commission on Appointments (CA), under the stewardship of Senate President/Chairman of the Commission Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III, banged its gavel sealing the confirmation of **Department of Health Secretary Francisco Tiongson Duque III**’s *ad interim* appointment during the CA’s plenary session held on February 7. This was done following a meticulous process of committee hearings conducted on January 31 and February 7.

In his sponsorship speech, Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan II, Chairman of the CA Committee on Health, highlighted the good Secretary’s career achievements which include: as former President/Chief Executive Officer of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth); being appointed as Secretary of the Department of Health under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s term; becoming Chairman of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), among others. Senator Honasan noted, “The country is confronted with a serious public health challenge caused by the Dengvaxia vaccine. But Dr. Duque has stayed on course and kept faith in guiding not only his Department, but in informing the Filipino people of the measures that are being undertaken by government to address the situation.” Senators Pacquiao, Zubiri, and Ejercito, and Rep. Joel Mayo Z. Almario, delivered their respective seconding speeches. Also, Majority Floor Leader Rep. Rodolfo T. Albano III read into the records the endorsement of Sen. Ralph G. Recto .

Secretary Duque earned his Bachelor of Science degree and Doctor of Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas. He took up Master of Science in Pathology and a three-year Immunology and Scientific Training at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. He also finished a post-graduate Course in Executive Education on Health Program Management at the Harvard University and another post-graduate course on Planning and Managing Medical Education for the 21st Century at the Asian Institute of Management.

Testament to his dedication and hardwork, Secretary Duque received various awards and recognitions which include: 2014 People Manager of the Year in Public Sector from the People Management Association of the Philippines; Doctor of Humanities (Honoris Causa) from the Pangasinan State University; Commendation from the World Health Organization for his leadership and management in developing excellent risk communication strategies against AH1N1; Communications Excellence in Organization (CEO) EXCEL Award for successfully launching media and advocacy campaigns against dengue, salmonella, ebola in hogs and firecracker injuries.

Secretary Duque is a true blue Manileño who is married to Dermatologist Carolina Ablaza with whom he has five (5) daughters.

In the same Plenary Session, the elections of Senators Joseph Victor G. Ejercito as Chairperson of the Committee on the Interior and Local Government vice Sen. Sonny Angara; Grace Poe as Chairperson of the Committee on Agrarian Reform and Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs vice Senator Vicente Sotto III; Risa Hontiveros as Chairperson of the Committee on Energy vice Senator Franklin Drilon and Sherwin Gatchalian as Chairperson of the Committee on Justice and Judicial and Bar Council and Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Vice Senator Loren Legarda. The election and oath taking of Senator Gregorio B. Honasan II as the Assistant Majority Floor Leader of the Commission and as Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and Resolutions was also witnessed at plenary.