



House Journal

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2008

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First Day

Monday, January 14, 2008

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Hafa Adai, Tirow, good morning, and welcome to the House of Representatives. We will now begin the House of Representatives' installation ceremony of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Before I announce the members-elect I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the Honorable Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan, Father Jesse Reyes, and Reverend Ray Kinsella to the dais. (Pause.) I am honored to present to you the Representatives-elect of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Representing Election District 1 are Representative-elect David Mundo Apatang, Representative-elect Diego Tenorio Benavente, Representative-elect Joseph Pinaula Deleon Guerrero, Representative-elect Joseph Castro Reyes, Representative-elect Christina Marie Sablan, and Representative-elect Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres. Representing Election District 2 are Representative-elect Oscar Manglona Babauta and Representative-elect Raymond Demapan Palacios. Representing Election District 3: Representative-elect Francisco Santos Dela Cruz, Representative-elect Heinz Sablan Hofschneider, Representative-elect Arnold Indalecio Palacios, Representative-elect Ramon Angailen Tebuteb, Representative-elect Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres, and Representative-elect Ray Naraja Yumul. Representing Election District 4: Representative-elect Joseph Norita Camacho and Representative-elect Justo Songao Quitugua. Representing Election District 5: Representative-elect Edward Tudela Salas, Representative-elect Rosemond Blanco Santos. Representing Election District 6, from the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, Representative-elect Edwin Palacios Aldan. Representing Election District 7, from the Island of Rota, Representative-elect Victor Borja Hocog. Please be seated. Along with our Honorable and distinguished guests, present with us today are Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron, the Honorable Governor Benigno R. Fitial, the Honorable Resident Representative to the United States Pete A. Tenorio, the Honorable Robert C. Naraja, Presiding Judge, and the Honorable David Wiseman, Associate Judge, the Honorable Mayor of Saipan Juan B. Tudela. From the Department of Interior Mr. Jeff Schorr, Mr. Nick Pula and Mr. Tom Bussanich. I would also like to recognize the honorable former Representatives Ana Teregeyu and Jesus Attao. Families, friends, and supporters of our members-elect, I welcome all of you to the CNMI Legislature, House of Representatives. I now recognize Representative-elect Ramon Angailen Tebuteb.

Representative Tebuteb: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the House Chamber. I am very pleased and honored to announce that it is the consensus of the Representatives-elect of the 16th House of Representatives that Representative-elect Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres shall be the Speaker Pro Tem and Representative-elect Joseph N. Camacho the Floor Leader Pro Tem of the First Organizational Session of the House until the election of the Speaker and Floor Leader.

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Thank you Representative-elect Tebuteb. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the Speaker Pro Tem, Representative-elect Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres and Floor Leader Pro Tem, Representative-elect Joseph N. Camacho for this Organizational Session of the 16th Northern Mariana Commonwealth Legislature. I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the Speaker Pro Tem up to the dais.

(Speaker Pro Tem was escorted to the Dais).

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Please all rise. I now call upon the Department of Public Safety Color Guards for the posting of the Colors, and I also call upon the honorable former Representative Candido B. Taman to lead in the singing of the U.S. National and Commonwealth Anthems.

(National & Commonwealth Anthems were sung)

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Please remain standing as I call upon Father Jesse Reyes for the Invocation.

(Father Reyes gave the Invocation)

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Please be seated. Thank you, Father Reyes. It is with great honor and pleasure that I call on Speaker Pro Tem, Representative-elect Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres, to officially call the House of Representatives' Organizational Session of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to order. Speaker Pro Tem, please.

CALL TO ORDER

The House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas was called to order in its First Day, First Regular Session on Monday, at 10:10 a.m. in the House Chamber, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Representative-elect Stanley T. McGinnis Torres, Speaker Pro Tem presided.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. As the Speaker Pro Tem for this Inaugural Session, I would like to make a short statement. Honorable Members of this August Body, before I call this inaugural session to order, I am taking this opportunity to declare myself, among other things, Pro Tem Hugo Chavez of Venezuela or Vladimir Putin of Russia over this House and maybe of CUC too. I am giving this short privilege statement from this Chair so that none amongst you will question why I am up here. I asserted that I be designated Speaker Pro Tem among the 12 of you know which party we are and of which none of us objected to. If anyone thinks that it is unconstitutional, I say, so be it. I therefore inform all of you that I also proclaim myself as your current ruler and I will rule and overrule anyone who will not agree with me sitting up here, even Harry Blalock and Ron Hodges. Honorable Members of this Body, honored guests, family members, friends and supports, I Speaker Pro Tem Estanislao, better and legally known as Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres officially call this Organization Session of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to order on this 14th day of January, 2008. All rise for a moment of legislative prayer. All representatives-elect please repeat after me: Lord Jesus Christ, grant us the wisdom and courage to do what is right and good for our people. Hail Mary, Mother of our Lord, pray for us. Amen. Before I call on the House Clerk, I must first organize my home in order to legally conduct this session. I hereby make the following appointments: For Senior Chief Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Peter Olopai Towai, for Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, Simeon Rabauliman Lisua, for House Clerk, Ms. Evelyn Castro Fleming, for House Lead Counsel, Ms. Antonette Ramon Villagomez. Now that this House is in order and secured, House Clerk, please call the attendance of the representatives-elect.

CALL OF THE ROLL BY ELECTION DISTRICTS

The Clerk called the roll in numerical order by election districts.

Election District 1

Representative-elect David Mundo Apatang	Present
Representative-elect Diego Tenorio Benavente	Present
Representative-elect Joseph Pinaula Deleon Guerrero	Present
Representative-elect Joseph Castro Reyes	Present
Representative-elect Christina Marie Elise Sablan	Present
Representative-elect Ralph Anthony DLGuerrero Torres	Present

Election District 2

Representative-elect Oscar Manglona Babauta	Present
Representative-elect Raymond Demapan Palacios	Present

Election District 3

Representative-elect Francisco Santos Dela Cruz	Present
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Representative-elect Heinz Sablan Hofschneider	Present
Representative-elect Arnold Indalecio Palacios	Present
Representative-elect Ramon Angailen Tebuteb	Present
Representative-elect Stanley Tudela McGinnis Torres	Present
Representative-elect Ray Naraja Yumul	Present
Election District 4	
Representative-elect Joseph James Norita Camacho	Present
Representative-elect Justo Songao Quitugua	Present
Election District 5	Present
Representative-elect Edward Tudela Salas	Present
Representative-elect Rosemond Blanco Santos	Present
Election District 6	
Representative-elect Edwin Palacios Aldan	Present
Election District 7	
Representative-elect Victor Borja Hocog	Present

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Thank you, Ms. Fleming. Let the record show that all 20 representatives-elect are present and constitutes a complete House and ready for official business.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Representatives-elect and spouses, please rise for our swearing in for the Office of House of Representatives of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel Demapan, please administer the Oath of Office.

Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan: Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

The following was repeated by all the Representatives-elect.

“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, the applicable provisions of the Constitution, laws and treaties of the United States of America, and that I will faithfully discharge my duties to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan: Congratulations. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF THE HOUSE RULES

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres recognized Floor Leader Pro Tem Joseph N. Camacho.

Floor Leader Pro Tem Joseph N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I respectfully submit to this August Body H. R. NO. 16-1, “A House Resolution to adopt the Rules of the House of Representatives attached herewith as appendix A; to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to review the Rules and for other purposes.”, and move for its adoption.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Discussion?

Members voiced “ready”.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Since I am the rule up here, I will call on the Clerk to call the roll.

The House Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt H. R. NO. 16-1:

Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative David M. Apatang	yes
Representative Oscar M. Babauta	yes
Representative Diego T. Benavente	yes
Representative Joseph N. Camacho	yes
Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Victor B. Hocog	yes
Representative Heinz S. Hofschneider	yes
Representative Raymond D. Palacios	yes
Representative Arnold I. Palacios	yes
Representative Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Representative Joseph C. Reyes	yes
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	yes
Representative Edward T. Salas	yes
Representative Rosemond B. Santos	yes
Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Representative Ralph DLG. Torres	yes
Speaker Pro Tem Stanley T. McGinnis Torres	yes
Representative Ray N. Yumul	yes

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: House Resolution 16-1 is now legally adopted in this Organizational Session. This House is now under its Rules and Procedure and ready to call for the Election of Officers.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres recognizes Representative-elect Heinz Hofschneider.

Representative Hofschneider: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I am please and nominate Mr. Arnold Indalecio Palacios for the Speaker of the House for the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature by acclamation.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Any objection?

Representative Babauta: The motion by the mover is for acclamation, I move that we close nomination and vote.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Without discussion. House Clerk, please Call the Roll for the record.

The Clerk called the roll on the election of the Honorable Arnold I Palacios to the Office of the Speaker of the House for the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative David M. Apatang	yes
Representative Oscar M. Babauta	yes
Representative Diego T. Benavente	yes
Representative Joseph N. Camacho	yes

Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Victor B. Hocog	yes
Representative Heinz S. Hofschneider	yes
Representative Raymond D. Palacios	yes
Representative Arnold I. Palacios	yes
Representative Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Representative Joseph C. Reyes	yes
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	yes
Representative Edward T. Salas	yes
Representative Rosemond B. Santos	yes
Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Representative Ralph DLG. Torres	yes
Speaker Pro Tem Stanley T. McGinnis Torres	yes
Representative Ray N. Yumul	yes

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: I will now call on the Speaker elect Arnold Indalecio Palacios to the Dais. Senior Sergeant-at-Arms Towai, please escort our new Speaker. Before I hand the gavel to the new Speaker, while I am still the Pro Tem, I ask him to give his acceptance speech.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you. Let me take this opportunity first to express my sincere appreciation to every member of this House for your vote of confidence. I thank one of the most senior members of the House for being the Speaker Pro Tem. With that, I believe we can move forward.

Speaker Pro Tem Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, my congratulations to you and it is an honor to hand you your gavel. You are now in command and I will submit to your order.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Torres. If there is no objection I would like to ask Representative Torres to remain seated on the Dais.

There was no objection raised.

ELECTION OF VICE-SPEAKER

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So we move on to the Election of the Vice Speaker. I recognize Representative Benavente.

Representative Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to nominate a fellow colleague from Election District 1, the Honorable Joseph Deleon Guerrero for the Office of Vice Speaker.

The motion was seconded by several others.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Hofschneider, recognized.

Representative Hofschneider: I move for acclamation.

The motion was seconded by several others and the motion to elect Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero to the Office Vice Speaker for the House of Representatives of the 16th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature by acclamation was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion is carried. Representative Deleon Guerrero is our new Vice Speaker. (Applause). We move to the Election of Floor Leader.

ELECTION OF THE FLOOR LEADER

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I recognize Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the position of Floor Leader, I am honored to nominate Representative Joseph Norita Camacho

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Hocog, recognized.

Representative Hocog: I would like to make a subsidiary motion, Mr. Speaker, to move for acclamation.

The motion was seconded by several others and the motion to elect Representative Joseph N. Camacho to the Office of Floor Leader for the House of Representatives of the 16th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature by acclamation was carried by voice vote with an indication of two nay votes.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Joseph ...

Representative Yumul: Division on the Floor.

Representative Babauta: Mr. Speaker, point of clarification. I guess the ayes have it, I only heard one nay vote, unless otherwise the Chair rules.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I did not hear – was there an objection on the Floor?

Representative Babauta: No objection, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you. I now rule that the House of Representatives have elected Representative Joseph Norita Camacho as the Floor Leader for the Sixteenth Legislature. (Applause) We will take a five-minute recess.

The House recessed at 10:45 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 10:52 a.m.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: We are back to our session and the next item on our Agenda is the Notification of the Senate and the Governor.

NOTIFICATION OF THE SENATE AND THE GOVERNOR

Representative Stanley Torres: Privilege.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: State your privilege, Representative Torres.

Representative Stanley Torres: I would like to ask for the indulgence of the members to allow the media and companies interested in taking picture to include Mr. Ed Propst to roam in the Chamber as they wish. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So ordered. Sergeant-at-Arms, please advise the media that they are allowed to come into the gallery.

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, if I may, maybe we can allow them to lay low in the center, at a low setting or at the corners.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Yumul, I do not believe it is appropriate to allow the media to come into the Chamber, they can take pictures from the gallery. Under the Notification of the Senate and the Governor, I would like to appoint Representatives Stanley Torres and Ralph Torres to advise the Governor that the House is organized and ready conduct official business.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, are you ordering us now?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I am asking you, please advice the Governor.

Representative Stanley Torres: Is the transportation ready for us to be transported to the Office of the Governor.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: It will be ready in two minutes.

Representative Stanley Torres: Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I now ask the Honorable Representatives Victor Hocog and Edwin Aldan to please advise the Senate the House is ready to conduct official business.

Representative Hocog: Do you want us to do it now?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Yes sir.

Representative Hocog: It shall be done.

Representative Babauta: Point of information, Mr. Speaker. We are in session, right?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Yes.

Representative Babauta: Can we take a short recess.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: If there is no objection, we will take a short recess until the gentlemen return.

The House recessed at 10:55 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 10:59 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

Speaker Arnold Palacios: This House is back in session. Representative Hocog, is there any communication from the Senate.

Representative Hocog: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I and Representative Aldan reported to the Senate that the House of Representatives is duly organized and we are ready to conduct business along with the Senate. Further, I made a statement and I asked the question to the senators whether or not we are going to work together or are we going to go against each other. I am happy to report that we are going to work together. So I told them, thank you very much, Mr. President, we are not in conflict, we are in service and the House is ready to do business with you. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you for that report. I would now receive the message from the Senate.

Senator Paterno Hocog: Mr. Speaker, Senator Jude Hofschneider and I were sent from the Senate of the Sixteenth Northern Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Legislature to inform you and the members of this Body that the Senate is duly organized and ready to transact business. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the organization of the Senate is that of Senator Pete P. Reyes, President; Senator Felix T. Mendiola, Vice President; Senator Jude Hofschneider, Floor Leader; and Senator Maria Frica T. Pangelinan, Senate Legislative Secretary.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you very much, Senators. We move on. I have a communication handed to me by the minority members of the House announcing that the Minority Caucus of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth, after meeting and discussing, respectfully informs the Speaker that Representative Oscar M. Babauta has been elected as the Minority Leader of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Signed by: Oscar M. Babauta, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Raymond D. Palacios, Justo S. Quitugua, Edwin P. Aldan and Victor B. Hocog. Let us give him a round of applause. Congratulations. (Applause).

HSE. COMM. 16-1: From the Minority Caucus informing the Speaker that they have elected Representative Oscar M. Babauta as the Minority Leader for the 16th House of Representatives.

Representative Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative Hofschneider: Privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Recognized.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker and members, I am honored to recognize Lieutenant Governor Timothy Villagomez. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Welcome Lieutenant Governor Villagomez. We move on to line item 11.

STATEMENTS OF MEMBERS

The Chair recognized Representative David M. Apatang.

Representative Apatang: *Hafa Adai*, good morning my constituents in Election District 1, friends, colleagues, people of the Commonwealth. It is a profound honor and privilege that I am here before you today to deliver my brief remarks. But before I proceed further, allow me to say this -- Man, it feels great to be back. Undeniably our presence this morning would not have been made possible had it not been from the blessing of the Almighty, the undying and untiring support of families and friends as well as countless other individuals and groups most especially my fellow people of Precinct 1. I am sincerely humbled by your continued support, vote of confidence, and of course, your presence here this morning. This inaugural event certainly loses all its significance if we were to leave out the people of our great Commonwealth. Therefore, please know that this is your day and my colleagues and I are proud to share it with you. Next, rather than subject you to a lengthy and tiring lecture on many challenging issues and problems that now plague the CNMI, I feel that it will be more appropriate for me to assure you that my colleagues and I pledge to step and remain united, committed and dedicating a force for the sole purpose of overcoming and eliminating this mounting social woes. In fact, I am most certain that each legislator has a plan of action. And thanks to you, the CNMI people, each of us has the opportunity to carry out these plans. Working collaboratively with the present administration combined with your continued support, I am confident that the CNMI will prosper once again. We all share the same challenges. Thus, it of paramount importance that we all work together in unison so that can succeed in moving the Commonwealth forward. And I say, Commonwealth forward in the direction of social, economic, and political prosperity. As your elected representative, I am determined realizing this much needed initiatives and solutions the people of the Commonwealth deserve no less. In closing and on behalf of my family, friends and supporters, I want to once again extend our utmost gratitude to everyone who contributed to my election as your representative to the Sixteenth CNMI Legislature. Before I let you go, I want you to know that although I ran as an Independent candidate in Precinct 1, I told all my friends and colleagues just before I decided to run as an Independent candidate that I am still a Republican and I remain a Republican by heart. So do not forget that I am a Republican although I ran as an Independent. You can call it “IR” or whatever you want to call it. I am still a Republican. Thank you. *Si Yu’us Ma’ase*. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Apatang. I now recognize Representative Quitugua.

Representative Quitugua: *Si Yu’us Ma’ase, Mr. Speaker. Good morning para todus i man gaige guine na Kuetpon Guma’ Kongresu. Un dangkulu na agradesimento yan aprisiasion para i asagua-hu as Jackie, i famaguon-hu para todus i kinemprenden niha, i supottasion yan ayudo. Maseha ti ma a’papasu yo’ guine gi lehislatu ya ti mañuñule’ yo’ extra income para i gima’ ma nae yo’ nui dangkulu na supottasion niha sa i interes hu para baihu ayuda i taotao Saipan yan iya Marianas enteramente. Congratulations para hagu, Mr. Speaker, Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero, yan i Floor Leader as Representative Camacho yan todus i membrun este na Guma’ ni man presente na oga’an. Guine gi Mina’ Disisais na Lehislatu, ta ekspepekta na dangkulu mas i taotao iyon-niha expectations giya hita sa’ bula prublema fumafana’ hit. Disdi anai makpo i eleksion, hu kumite yo’ ta’lo un biahe na hu po’lu i pattida-hu gi sanhiyong i pettan i Lehislatu sa baihu fan ayuda ta’lo komu membru gi este i Mina’ Disisais na Kongresista. Para i Precinct 4 na komunitat hu ekstetende un dangkulu na Si Yu’us Ma’ase yan aprisiasion pot i supotasion ni en nae yo’ gi Katotsi, Kinsi, ya pa’go gi Disisais na Lehislatu. Hu tuñgo ha’ na tisiña todus hu na’fan satisfecho hamyo guenao gi*

sanhiyong gi komunidad lao ginen i ayudon i manga'chong hu guine na lehislatura yan i man ma'pos siña bai in ayuda hamyo nui hafa en nisisita na ayudo gi komunidad lao dispensa yanggen tisiña todū in na'posipble hafa i malago miyo na klasen ayudo gi komunidad. Ti i Precinct 4 ha, na todū enteramente iya Saipan, Luta yan Tinian. Komu membru yo' guine gi lehislatura, obligasion hu para baihu fan ayuda na i interes para i komunidad i Commonwealth. Guaha na biahe siempre ni man mama'disision hit nui eyu i ma a'alok unpopolar na disision lao komu para u inayuda espisiatmente i manaotaota giya Marianas, siempre ta fatinas enao na disision ya siempre lokkue i taotaota siña ha' ti ma gof komprende gi tituhon, lao humahlom yo' na dispues siempre ma komprende hafa na ta fatinas eyu na disision para i minaolek iya Marianas. Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Quitugua. I recognize the Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all congratulations. In the interest of time, especially because we have twenty members now, not eighteen, and also because I have a terrible cold I decided to forego the traditional lengthy inaugural speech and offer a few short messages of appreciation. First of all I want to extend *Si Yu'us Ma'ase para i familia-ku, i asagua-hu, i manaina-hu, todū i man tihu, primo yan prima, yetno yan yetna ni man manayuda*. You guys have stood behind me since I began and I am so thankful you are still there. Also to my Chairman Pete Deleon Guerrero and the Committee to Elect, to our Precinct Chair, Ms. Ana Teregeyu, her able leadership, and the other precinct club members, to all the Republicans who stood together and supported my candidacy and to all our constituents in Precinct 1, I just want to say that I am so honored, I am still honored even though this is my fourth term. It is still a privilege for me to serve you, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase nui todū i supotasion miyo*. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my humble gratitude to all the members of the Sixteenth House of Representatives for their vote of confidence for the vote of Vice Speakership. If I have forgotten anyone, I beg for your forgiveness. You are in my heart and I will extend my appreciation to you personally when I meet you. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase todos*.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Deleon Guerrero. I recognize Representative Palacios.

Representative Raymond Palacios: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Mr. Speaker. Special guests, Archbishop Anthony Apuron, Father Jesse Reyes, ladies and gentlemen: *buenas dias*, good morning. Your presence here today to join us in this inauguration ceremony signifies your convictions and aspirations as we mark the beginning of a new chapter in our quest to aid our local economy recover and address other pressing issues that has greatly impacted our local government, our business community and our livelihood. To ensure that our bout in alleviating and ridding the barriers that is hampering the road to economic recovery, it is detrimental that we work collectively with the Senate, the Administration, with the input of the business community in administering programs that are conducive to economic development. At this juncture, it is incumbent that we set political difference aside and focus on the critical issues on hand. The record high utility cost, which spurs uproar and inconveniences on our people, in particular, families that are struggling in making ends meet also top our agenda needing immediate attention along with adequate funding for essential government services, alarming crime rate, and federalization issues. Providing incentives to businesses, implementing policies that is both attractive and investor friendly, pursuing alternative energy, privatization of government services, strict enforcement of the law, rules and regulations, and establishing good working relationship with the Senate, the Administration, as well as the Federal Government will undoubtedly aid in our pursuit in overcoming the challenges ahead. Let us

not compromise our children's education, our health and welfare, or safety, and the CNMI's future – sacrifices are inevitable, we must unite and act now in laying the foundation for economic recovery. My dear people, as your representative, I am deeply honored and I stand firm in my commitment to aid in the rebuilding process and in the elimination of the obstacles impacting its growth. I do admit thought that I have a lot to learn considering being my first term in this prestigious profession. But, that alone will not hinder nor will it deprive me of my responsibility as a public servant. To the residents of Election District 2, on behalf of my family, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for your untiring support and vote of confidence. To our hard working precinct club members and all individuals and businesses that contributed in one way or the other, *Dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase*. Last, but not the least, to the Commonwealth Election Commission staff and Board Members and all individuals that participated in our democratic election process, I salute you all. *Este ha' Si Yu'us Ma'ase. Ghillisow*. Thank you. *Buenas Dias*. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Palacios. I recognize Representative Santos.

Representative Santos: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. I would like to say that today is a day for the people of Precinct 5 the newest precinct in the House and this is the day for the residents. To the voters and supporters of Precinct 5, my utmost gratitude and appreciation for your thoughts, support, prayer and your vote in this last election. But most of all I would like to thank the good Lord, without Him, His guidance, I will not be here today. I wanted to thank especially the Archbishop for making time out today to be with me and my family and as well as everybody here. He is a busy man – thank you, Archbishop. To my mom, my undying love and gratitude for everything that you have done and you continue to do. To my family, especially my brother David, because I do not have a lot of siblings, these two people – my brother David and my sister Luisa faced a lot at the front of my campaigning. I want to thank Gary for all the help and support. I took this same Oath of Office as an attorney and I think it is an awesome responsibility that we now carry as members of this Sixteenth Legislature. I come here with professional responsibility and human ethics and I hope we all work together with professionalism and the highest standard of conduct in our offices in the best interest of the people, the issues, and the land of the Commonwealth. There are always solutions to every problem and I hope that we all work towards that end. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Santos. Before we move on, Representative Stanley Torres and Representative Ralph Torres, you are back from the Governor's Office. Do you have any report?

Representative Ralph Torres: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We got in return the annual report of Fiscal Year 2007.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Annual report for what?

Representative Ralph Torres: For the budget.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Oh, okay.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, we delivered the message to the Governor and it is not a trip of futility, we came back with what Representative Ralph Torres just mentioned. It is a good sign and better times is in sight. We came back with a product. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Torres. I now call upon Representative Joe Reyes.

Representative Reyes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I would like to thank my family, most especially my wife Maryann for the support during my campaign. I would also like to thank the members of my Committee to Elect, Mr. Joe Palacios, the Chairperson, and the officers of Precinct Club 1 chaired by Ana Teregeyu, to all my friends and all voters of Precinct 1 for giving me this opportunity to serve them in this Sixteenth Legislature. Amid the serious challenges facing our Commonwealth, I believe it is the duty of this body to restore the confidence of the voters. We need to earn their trust by passing legislation that will fix the problems we face, not create more problems. I ask that we all work together in harmony for the good of the people putting political ambition aside until the next campaign. We need to listen to the people who put us here. They put their trust in us to work together for a better Commonwealth. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you for being elected to serve as our Speaker for the Sixteenth Legislature and the same honor goes to Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero our new Vice Speaker and lastly, Joe Camacho our new Floor Leader. Thank you all very, very much. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Reyes. I recognize Representative Benavente.

Representative Benavente: *Hafa adai*, good morning to all my fellow colleagues and your families, distinguished guests that have joined us this morning and to everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome and thank you for being here. I would first like to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and the officers of this Sixteenth Legislature and I, once again, offer my congratulations to all my colleagues and your families. I would like to say a few words of appreciation this morning and I want to start by saying that on behalf of my wife Vicky, who is sitting behind me this morning, I want to thank my chairman Joe Sanchez who is also sitting with me and the Committee to Elect Diego Benavente this election for all their hard work. I want to acknowledge and thank all, the Precinct 1 Club Chair Ana Teregeyu and the Committee and most importantly the people of Precinct 1 for their vote of confidence in electing me back to the legislature. One thing that I kept saying to the people when I was campaigning and that is that I missed my job. I missed representing the people and I really wanted to come back and I want to thank the people of Precinct 1 for their vote of confidence for allowing me to come back to the legislature. I am ready to work, I am ready to support, represent and serve the people of the Commonwealth. Thank you. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Benavente. I recognize Representative Dela Cruz.

Representative Dela Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and congratulations. First of all I wish to extend a warm welcome to all that are here today on our Sixteenth Legislative Inauguration. I would like to thank my family most especially to my wife Lisa and our children, our friends and supporters who have made it possible for me to be one of twenty elected Representatives in this House today. I am most humbled. To my colleagues, I congratulate each one of you today. Each one of us was voted into office because of a need. A need and demand from our people for a better future, a greater vibrant economy for our Commonwealth but, most importantly, a better standard of living for the people we represent and we represent all the people who call the Commonwealth their home. I truly believe that by working together on different issues facing our Commonwealth each one of us must always work with the sense of urgency and commitment. At times during this Sixteenth Legislature decisions will be made that may not be too favorable to all, but I believe that deliberating and even debating will bring the issue to a conclusive understanding to all. I pledge to work with you my

colleagues and not against you. I pledge to respect your ideals and thoughts on the various issues confronting us here in our Commonwealth. During the Fifteenth Legislature I was sometimes asked and at times labeled somewhat as a maverick because of certain stances I have taken against the beliefs and policy of the Administration and the Leadership. I will continue to practice my beliefs and make decisions in this Sixteenth Legislature based on merits and sound prudent ideas. With that said, Mr. Speaker, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Oloomway*, thank you. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Dela Cruz. I recognize Representative Yumul.

Representative Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you because I think this is the first time we have done this type of an arrangement and I am usually the last one to speak because it is always done alphabetical order, so I really thank you. (Laughter.) Of course I also thank my family: my wife Marites, my parents Jess and Frances, and also my grandparents Tomasa Camacho, Leo Naraja, the Committee to Elect, they all pitched and really helped with my re-election and I thank them. Of course I would like to thank our Club Chair, Skep Palacios I know it is a really tough campaign for the guy when he is trying to coordinate five incumbents if you will, to try to get us together because it was a very daunting task. The party also needs to be recognized, they have done a good job. I thank people that voted all of us in and that I think they want to see changes. We went pretty smoothly with the election of our officers and I think it is rightly so, so that we need to just move on and get to the meat and potatoes of the issue that is confronting the Commonwealth. We all witness the short brownout here in the Legislature so that is the solemn reminder that we are still in the state of emergency as declared by the Governor. I am also thankful that for the first time in the last four years I am no longer the youngest member of this body. I actually wished that I would be with younger people such as my good classmate Representative Rosemond Santos but I am also joined by Representative Ralph Torres and Representative Tina Sablan, whom I believe is the youngest so I am really happy that there is more of the next generation of future leaders to help and run the government. Of course all respects to the veteran Representatives here because their insights into how the government of the CNMI was shaped in the past twenty to thirty years is very valuable and I cherish every members expertise in that field. If there is no objection, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House Clerk to just take my mission statement and enter it into the record so I can keep my speech short. And with that I would like to thank everybody, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) *Mission Statement*: I will join the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature with a continued sense of optimism and humility in the face of economic despair. We, the legislators, must continue to bring forth a cohesive, civil body to swiftly address the economic turmoil that we are all witnessing. The migration of key businesses to other economically advantageous locations still continues, and the departure of key airlines servicing our islands have yet to return, which served our last major industry, namely the tourism industry. While these series of events are regrettable, we must overcome this immobility as we must now adapt and restructure, so that we may continue to promote the Marianas. I welcome the new members to the Sixteenth Legislature and I value the talent and experience that we bring, for the people of the Commonwealth have elected us with the trust of providing resourceful, prudent, and industrious legislation to safeguard our limited resources and in due course our way of life. For the last four years, I was the youngest amongst my peers. Now I am jointed by a few others who now will carry the distinction as the youngest. May this lead many more of the next generations of political aspirants to help bring fresh ideas and to especially carry the burden of leading our young Commonwealth that our elders have passed unto us. Let us again remember and not forget those who gone to fight for peace, freedom, and democracy throughout the world. But foremost, let us especially honor those who have given their lives because freedom is not free.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Yumul. Floor Leader Joseph Camacho.

Floor Leader Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations. I am third--that is the word that we practice in my house. First is God, because all things small, great, cannot be accomplished without God. We are very much thankful to him for our blessings during the campaign and today and for the next two years. Second is family, nobody can win an election by himself or herself, our families are our cornerstone. They keep us steady when our head gets too big, they keep us grounded remind us that we wake up with *mugu* in our eye, and just like everybody else we still have to shower and shave and get dressed, so our family sustains us. And then, I am third, I pledge to this August Body to bring everything that I have been educated on, trained and whatever talents and skills I have to help this August Body to solve all the problems that we are facing here in the Commonwealth. I will not pretend, I will not lie that I have all the solutions, but I will pledge that we will do our very best and work really hard. I would like to thank all the voters of Precinct 4 who came out on Election Day and voted and exercised their Constitutional right to vote. I would like to thank my Committee to Elect who without compensation showed up everyday at meetings, pocket meetings, roadside waving, cooked and baked, and moved tables and tents on the belief and of the faith that this August Body can come together and solve the problems of the Commonwealth. Mr. Speaker and this August Body, thank you so much and I look forward to working with you. Thank you. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Camacho. I recognize Representative Stanley Torres.

Representative Stanley Torres: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, *ti hu tungo kao mangagaige ha' este na onoraple lao sin entbatgo bai hu sangan todú i na'an-niha: si i Onoraple Gobietno-ta as Benigno Repeki Fitial, i Segundo Gobietno-ta as Timothy Pangelinan Villagomez, i Eksalensia Señor Ak-Obispo Anthony Sablan Apuron, Eksalensia Señor Obispo Tomas Aguon Camacho, i Onoraple Magas i Hustisia Miguel Sablan Demapan, Onoraple Hustisia Alexandro Cruz Castro, Onoraple Hustisia Juan Atalig Manglona, Onorable Magas Hues Robert Camacho Naraja, Onoraple Magas Hues Juan Tudela Lizama, Onoraple Hues David Wiseman, Onoraple Hues Kenneth Govendo, Onoraple Hues Ramona Villagomez Manglona, Pale' Jesse yan Reverend Kinsella, yan todú man Onoraple na bisita-ta, buenas dias. Nae yo' dididi nui atension miyo ya bai hu Saluda yan bu-muenas dias ta'lo todus hamyo espesiatmente hamyo nui munae yo' nui konfiansa yan inangoku para este i Mina' Disisais na tetminon Lehislatúra yan i patisipao-hu gi historian i metgot na Commonwealth Isla-ta Marianas. I disafio ni ta fafana' mo'na yan i opottunadat obligasion-ta na debi ta cho'gue maolek yan onesto para todú taotao-ta ke di heminus pot un los kuantos ha'. Obligasion-ta yan morat-ta komu man ma ilihe hit na setbienten publiko na ta cho'gue mas onesto yan integredad. I taotao-ta man-manifest yan abladao na hita inayek niha ya adahe na ta malenfanñahon siha. Ta nisisita na tafan macho'cho kon hinemitde yan i administasion-ta ya tana ifekchuat umapagayi i makat na inkatgo yan at mismo ta na guahayi mas rekto i magastaña i fengkas publiko apasiset adelanto para i tetminon resulta-ta i man ma alakuenta yan gi onesto fuetsan todo. Hu insisista na ta embrasia i mission koperasion yan inobasion para i mehorat teimpon crono-metral para i taotao tano interu islas Marianas. Para todú i supottadot-hu, man amigo-hu, familiaku yan parientes ginen i metgot na Precinct 3 ni mu nae yo' nui inangoku yan konfiansan-niha ya mahatsa yo' ta'lo tatte guine gi Mina' Disisais na tetminon Kongresu, hu promesa yan hu empeña na bai hu kontinua gumuatdia todú i interes miyo yan todú i korompedon babarias gi halom i gobietnamento-ta yan para todú yan todú tetminasion todú espesilasasion mehoran sobresalit gi tano'ta. Pues pot otmimu para asagua-hu as Arlene, si Nan Chai, si Achu, si Connie Togawa, si Ebek, si Jack, si Jessica, si Esther, si Bill, yan si Benito, former*

Congressman Jesus Attao, *yan i lahi-hu as Stanley, Si Yu'us Ma'ase pot todu minapot yan finacho'cho miyo todo. Kon hinimitde yan saludo, setbenten miyo yo'. Si Yu'us Ma'ase pot i selensio na attension miyo todos. Ma-mao! Preba hao! Thank you.*

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Stanley Torres. I recognize Representative Ralph Torres.

Representative Ralph Torres: Before I begin my speech I would like to thank everyone here today, most especially my Precinct 1. Throughout the campaign I was going house to house asking everyone for just an opportunity to represent the people, and I was given that opportunity. It is my greatest honor to be here today to represent them and the people of the Commonwealth. So here we go. It is going to be a little longer than expected, but I am going to enjoy this couple of minutes that I am going to give you guys. Today we celebrate another milestone in the exercise of democracy. We have all been duly elected by our people to represent them in this important institution that have been charged to find solutions that would address our problems, enable our Government to provide vital public services, make our community a safer place to live, and to preserve the qualities that make us a true paradise. At the outset I want to note that we have several new faces in this Legislature, including myself. In this spirit I seek the indulgence and wisdom of our senior members to work in harmony with a new generation of leaders so that together we can explore the full potential of our capabilities and to help us realize our dreams and the vision of a brighter Commonwealth. I humbly ask that we put aside our political differences and find an amicable ground on which to work in harmony and not just amongst ourselves in the Legislature but also with the Administration and other public and private organizations. Our people expect and they deserve nothing less. As we all know the CNMI is facing serious and unprecedented problems that force us to venture into an uncharted territory including the unreliable and costly utility services, substandard health care services and facilities, our substandard conditions of our school facilities, inadequate number of qualified teachers and over crowding classrooms, high cost of basic necessities and increasing number of criminal activities. This all contribute to a serious threat to public health, our education, and the safety of our people. All these problems are very serious and very real and have longterm consequences that jeopardize the very core of our traditional values, our culture, our beliefs, and the way of life. I am aware that many of our plans may not be accomplishable in two years, but this should not discourage us from laying the foundation today for our future economic revitalization and recovery. We must, however, work together and explore all possible resources both traditional and non-traditional ways of addressing our problems. Throwing money at the problem is not always the right solution, therefore, we must continue to seek alternatives and more creative ways to provide the necessary tools the for government to carry out the constitutional and statutory mandates. In the process, we must not forget that our people have already been through some very tough and difficult times. In closing, I would like to congratulate all my colleagues here today for their successful election. I look forward in working with each and every one of you as we carry out our constitutional and statutory duties and responsibilities. To the people of Precinct 1, I thank you again very much for your vote of confidence, your support and believe in me. I would do my best to represent our precinct and the people of the Commonwealth, to protect our elderly, and most specially our children and for the generations to come. *Un dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase todus hamyo guine ni man gaige nu i suppottasion, i bendision, yan i botun konfiansa. Gof magof yo' na gaige yo' guine pa'go na para bai hu representa hamyo todus ni taotao Marianas. Hu bababa i petaku para hafa siha iyon-miyo concerns ni malago miyo para u ma susedi guine gi mamaila na dos años. Lökkue malago yo' para bai hu sangane siha i man'amko na guinen un tiempo hamyo fumachochuchu'e hame nu i famagu'on. Hame pago ni manhoben tarian-mame para bai in protehi hamyo ya pareho lökkue u guaha metgot na foundation para i famagu'on-ta sa' siha siempre un dia*

fuera pa'go manotogi guine para u ma reprisenta hit. Maila ta ayuda siha, ta nae siha hafa ma nisisita ya u metgot i foundation para siha. Thank you yan lakkue yan otimu malagu yu bai fangagao un dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase para si nana-hu yan tata-hu. Manaigue guine, mangaige San Lagu. Ti siña man hanao magi lao pot siha lakkue na matatachong yo' guine sa i bendision-niha, i sakrifision-niha ni ma nae ham, guahu yan i mañeluhu. Hu gagagao lakkue' hamyo manmanaina para enae animu para i famagu'on miyo sa yangin siña hame, siña lakkue todú i famaguon. Yan otimu hinasoku this is going to be the day lao manñge' lai na asagua si Diane Tudela. She is my backbone ya pa'go ni hu li'e. todus hamyo guine ni man matatachong maolekña un na fan manmaolek hamyo ni i asaguan miyo sa' it starts at home and I have a very fortunate wife and I thank her for everything -- her patience, her guidance, her love. Lastly, I would like to thank my committees, my Chairman Mr. Roman Tudela, thank you very much for your unconditional support, i mañelu-hu, my supporters un dankulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase ni in nae yo' este na opottunidad. Ya estague bai hu prometi todus hamyo na bai hu chagi nina'siña-hu chomo'gue i dinanchi para todus hit ni man gaige pa'go, yan i manatatte, yan i famagu'on. Si Yu'us Ma'ase. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Ralph Torres. I now recognize Representative Victor Hocog.

Representative Hocog: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Señor Speaker. Bai hu ekstende fine'nina felisitation para hago Señor yan i dos na ofisiales este na Kuetpo. Un dangkulo na congratulation para inmaneha i pomalu membru anai para inkatga mo'na i fotunan i intension i Mina' Disisais na Lehislatura gi halom Notte Marianas. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my fellow colleagues and to congratulate the electorates from the respective precincts that have put this fine gentlemen and fine women in the Sixteenth Legislature to assist you and your leadership, the Administration and the Senate as well, to lead them, provide sound, trust, and transparent leadership to the people of the Commonwealth. Let not one of you be mistaken about my representation in the Central CNMI Legislature. Though I was elected from Rota, I want the public to understand that I have equally the same power and the same authority as those that were elected from the island of Saipan and that is why we are called one Commonwealth for one direction for one common goal: yes, progress and prosperity. We are all here, Mr. Speaker and members of this August Body because of one thing, the people are bleeding, our government is suffering, and here we are. Do we have the necessary tools and equipment, Mr. Speaker and members of this August Body, to perform a miracle and return the Commonwealth government, once a upon a time, to where each and every one of the agencies and the departments have enjoyed the delivery of best public services. We will not offer the general public and the whole Commonwealth a miracle, but we will offer them with all our mights to be a productive leader in this Commonwealth. And we are all here today because we see that our people are bleeding, Mr. Speaker, and that is a big problem. But the Sixteenth Legislature and each one of us here today can be a predictor that can help these people and help and ourselves mold the future of the Commonwealth and its people. And the people, Mr. Speaker, are our reminders that we are not self-sufficient at this time and we need the help of God and the help of others to propel the vision for the next two years that we are to serve our constituents of the Commonwealth. And we have the people of our respective precincts and senatorial districts provide us the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and this opportunity that our electorates provided us is that they want us to pull them out from the rut and that will cause us, this body to charge to think creatively to assure that the two years of our term people cannot only feel the impact of this new leadership but ourselves to restore the integrity of this Legislature. And with that, Mr. Speaker, it is also a blessing that we are all elected today as I see each and everyone of us in this August Body -- they are equipped with talents, they are ready for productivity, and they are ready to*

face the swell of high waters and rough seas. It is a lesson, Mr. Speaker, for each and every one of us to seek public offices at a time like this when our economy is sinking. And this lesson, Mr. Speaker, is a challenge and this challenge will be our teacher to restore progress and prosperity to our government and to our ailing people. No place and no person, Mr. Speaker, is without problem. Every one has it. Every person, every island experience problems, but that is a good message. And the good message about knowing that there are problems everywhere, Mr. Speaker, is that they warn us of any and forthcoming potential disaster that our people will be faced with and our that government will experience. But one consolation, Mr. Speaker, with all this is it can solved. It is solvable, because no problem is without solution. The members of this August Body are equipped with the tools and the mechanism to revitalize the ailing and reduce substantially the suffering of our people and I beg the indulgence of each and every one and leadership of this Sixteenth Legislature. I hope that throughout your leadership see no Republicans, no Democrats, no Covenants, no Independents. I hope that leadership only see a group of intelligence, a group of individuals that can produce immediate solutions to the suffering of our constituents. And because of this, Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying that this Sixteenth Legislature is faced with future challenges and I hope that all the future challenges that we have will not be concluded to be a sunset of lie and let the Sixteenth Legislature look into it as the sunrise for a bright opportunity for all and government. And by this Mr. Speaker working together, together we are stronger. Thank you very much, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Hocog. I now recognize Representative Salas.

Representative Salas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I like to begin by extending a warm and hearty congratulation to you on your selection to lead us as the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Legislature. I would to also ditto my congratulatory sentiments to Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero and Floor Leader Joseph Camacho, also I would like to congratulate all my colleagues. Let me begin my remarks this morning by giving thanks and praise to our Lord God for this prestigious institution and for giving me an opportunity to be a part of it as we embark in a new course to find resolutions for the myriad of difficulties we and our people of the Commonwealth are currently experiencing and may I add for quite for.... (*End of Tape 2 side A*) ...and privileged to be given the trust and vote of confidence to represent our constituents in matters of outmost importance affecting our livelihood. I would like to thank my wife, Nona, who is sitting directly behind me, and my son Edward Angelo, who is not physically here this morning but I am sure he is thinking of me at this moment. I would like to thank them for their unrelenting and untiring support and being my most staunchest of supporters. I would to also thank my dad's brother, Uncle Kin, who is also sitting behind me. Thank you, Uncle Kin for that one evening when you broached the topic of politics and persuaded me to enter the political arena and run for office. Thank you for the faith and confidence and I hope to live up to your expectations. At this time I would also remember my dearly departed mother and father whom I am certain were with me throughout the campaign trail, during the Election on November 3, and most especially -- during the tabulation of the absentee ballots. This morning we have taken our oath of office as elected officials in the Lower House of the CNMI Legislature, let us not take this oath in vain but rather to our deepest heart and ensure that the bills we debate in this room and ultimately pass with the intent of enactment are constitutionally sound, and always for the protection and betterment of all our people. We have earlier sworn to uphold the Constitution of the CNMI and to discharge our duties to the best of our abilities. Let us never forget that. Our islands and our people continue to struggle with a depleting coffer due to diminishing resources and part due to the loss of a major industry. While there are other industries that play a pivotal role in our economic well-being, there is one industry that we must not allow to slip through the crevasses. We must not allow our tourism industry to falter. Every effort must be

given to ensure that this industry remain vibrant and strong. While MVA (Marianas Visitors Authority) continues its dialogue with the airline industry to increase the number of seats and flights to the CNMI, it is incumbent among us as legislators to partner with MVA and work cohesively together to ensure that its mission is ultimately realized. We must give them our 110% support. Now I would like to take this opportunity and extend *un dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase* to the people of Precinct 5 for giving me the chance to represent you in this room and the Republicans of Precinct 5 Chaired by Piripiri and Vice Chair John Guerrero and the rest of the officers. Thank you for endorsing my candidacy and for the arduous campaign we endeavored successfully. I would like to also thank the Chairman of the Republican Party, Mr. Tom Pangelinan, Vice Chairman Ramon Tudela, and Secretary Karl Reyes for all their support. Additionally, I would like to thank the Committee to Elect chaired by my cousin Joe Salas. And lastly I would like to thank former Congresswoman Ana Teregeyu for being a strong supporter and confidant throughout my campaign although I vacated the opportunity to serve in her precinct as a result of the redistricting which mandated the creation of Precinct 5. Thank you all and may God bless us all. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Salas. I now recognize Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Tebuteb: Thank you Mr. Speaker. *Faischroow, Bwal Tiroow, Apelughlugh, meseigh, alesh maghut, meta ubu feri, meta itam*. I would like to ask you now, Mr. Speaker, if you could translate that those Carolinian words.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I was about to ask you to do that. Remember, I am the Speaker.

Representative Tebuteb: There is a gist behind it the first one came from former Vice Speaker speaking in vernacular and a few other speakers whom also talked in Chamorro. The reason why I say that I guess the way it looks like with all due respect to you Representative Hofschneider, my nephew to my left who have a certain amount Carolinian blood, the words that I just spoke of, I believe there may be less if not more than 2% or 3% who understood what I have said. Basically, language should, like our oceans, be the bridge to affect things that we should strive for to make our Commonwealth a better place for all of us. Like music, although we may not understand some of the things that we may argue or debate of the issues that we may encounter I will strongly encourage that we put that in mind. Although there are differences there is always a similarity. First, on behalf of my family, my friends, my supporters, I would like to thank the supporters and voters of Precinct 3 whether you voted for me or not but for participating in our democratic process. Along the line also I would like to thank our off island friends, our dignitaries who are with us this morning and especially to all of you ladies and gentlemen for joining us today. I have a very brief message and basically the pledges and commitments that we have just taken I would like to ditto and echo that I also pledge to uphold our United States and CNMI Constitutions. At the same time, with the next few years that we will be deliberating in this House Chamber I would also encourage collective visions for all of us to focus on. Although we realize at the same time that the unique differences that we all have so that we work towards respect and mutual consent and notably for positive opportunities for all of us. At the same time I will encourage all the CNMI people to submit their points, views, arguments, and critics to my office, actually to every member. Lastly, I would like to congratulate all elected and now officially Representatives of our CNMI people, congratulations. To you, Mr. Speaker, our Vice Speaker, and to our Floor Leader, congratulations. And in closing, being an optimist, I say we have grand challenges and opportunities ahead. I shall never take for granted the honor and privilege bestowed upon us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Tebuteb. I now recognize Representative Aldan.

Representative Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of, I would like to congratulate you and the officers for this August Body of the Sixteenth Legislature. Before I forget like last two years, I want to recognize my wife *Ochi*, I want to thank her for being there and for her understanding; because unlike the rest of our colleagues other than myself and our colleague from Rota we are both what they call outer island voice so we depart with our family and come here and return. I thank you for the two years, for the support that you have been giving me during my political career and this will be my fourth time as an elected official. I would also like to thank my people of the Second Senatorial District for giving me this opportunity to serve them again. It is indeed an honor for me in these challenging times to step up and serve them again. Like, Mr. Vice Speaker, I would never forget – I have always asked you what was the biggest challenge during your election, you told me the first re-election, and it was the selection was very challenging for me. To the former Speaker Babauta, thank you for your understanding and guidance in the Fifteenth Legislature. Mr. Speaker, I stand and pledge in front of you as a Representative from Tinian as a member of the Minority Bloc to work with each one of you to jump start and help out our ailing economy, our over bloated government and a lot of things that we in the Fifteenth tried to fix. I would be remiss if I do not recognize and thank my Committee to Elect Chair, the Honorable Mayor of Tinian Jose P. San Nicolas and also the Vice Chair the Honorable former Mayor of Tinian James Mendiola for their die-hard spirit during the campaigns and for the advices. Mr. Speaker and members, I am not into grand speeches but I thank the off island guests for taking their time to come over to our island and to this part of the world, especially our federal friends from the OIA (Office of Insular Affairs), I welcome all of you and thank you for coming to witness our swearing in ceremony. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Aldan. My Vice Speaker, Representative Babauta, recognized.

Representative Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to make this short as possible because of our distinguish colleagues says good morning, but now it is good afternoon. Reverend Kinsella, Father Jesse Reyes, distinguished and honorable diplomats from both the federal government and the foreign countries, I recognize in the gallery former Speaker Joe Lifofoi, and our Washington Representative Pete A. Tenorio, thank you for joining us today. Mr. Speaker, I will be remiss too if I do not repeat Representative Apatang's code, "Man, it's good to be back". Back after a long eight term journey to this chamber and I thank the Lord above for this privilege and honor to continue to serve not only our people in Election District 2 but the entire people of the Commonwealth. I can envision this term, Mr. Speaker, as a memorable one too and I am glad to say I am happy to see back the likes of our former Speaker Heinz Hofschneider, former Speaker Diego Benavente, and of course Representative David Apatang, and Representative Victor Hocog whom personally I have worked with in many issues confronting our Commonwealth. Mr. Speaker, my family and I congratulate you, and so as the people of my district, for being elected and in accepting the position of the Speakership to lead us in the Sixteenth Commonwealth Legislature. I will be remiss to say that I am happy that we exchanged seats and I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to mention that. I also wish to congratulate Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero, Floor Leader Joseph Camacho and my distinguish colleagues of the Sixteenth Legislature. I will like to extend my humble and lovely gratitude to my wife whom is behind me, my children, my many families who have at times to try to dig deeper in their pockets to make sure that our pocket meetings is sufficient and most especially to the people of Election District 2, I guess all of you have known that my

district extended beyond I will not say uncontrollable but it is a decision of our democratic system in government that have extended our district all the way up to Fina Sisu and As Perdido, and I thank those people for recognizing the democratic process this past election. I wish to extend my humble gratitude to the Election District 2 Precinct Club Members for their untiring support, assistance, and in many cases their generosity and words of encouragement for me to continue on in representing their interest in this Legislative Hall. We have many young guns, both men and women, and I sincerely appreciate their thoughts and will accept comments from our newly elected members primarily the youthfulness of their expertise. In the likes my colleague Representative Ray Yumul, who will lead the youth members, please do not mislead them. (Laughter) We are here, Mr. Speaker, to work together as you and I have conversed earlier that we pledge to continue to work together for the benefit of our common people in reaching one common goal. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity during the last term that you and I have shared this chamber and the many incumbents who are here. I sincerely appreciate once more your untiring support and assistance during my tenure as being the Speaker of the Fifteenth House and I thank those members who were there for their professionalism in conducting our business. That being said, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Commonwealth people on behalf of all of us for their trust and confidence in each and every member who is sworn in to uphold the trust that we all take oath with. Thank you, good afternoon and I understand in due time lunch will be served. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Babauta. Of course we will continue to look forward to your wisdom and guidance in this term Representative Babauta. I recognize Representative Christina Sablan.

Representative Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good Afternoon. Some worthy calls have been made today to set aside partisan politics and to work together for the good of the Commonwealth. I hope that we continue to remember and practice these noble sentiments after today. And I urge my colleagues in the Sixteenth Legislature, as well as the Governor, the Lt. Governor, the Judiciary, and the Washington Representative to commit ourselves sincerely to achieving dialogue and cooperation in the coming years. I am not saying that I think we should never disagree. I am saying we have a moral imperative to rise above the gamesmanship, pettiness, and special interests that have characterized the nature of politics in the Commonwealth all these years. Surely, we can all agree that the fierce urgency of the present time and the suffering of all our people demand that we focus, prioritize the basic needs of our community, listen to our constituents, ask for help when we need it, and exercise our best judgment as we search for real and concrete solutions to the many critical issues that we face. Here is what people can expect from me in the next two years. I will continue to conduct myself in public office as I did before and during my campaign. I will speak and write honestly about my positions on the issues and encourage fruitful dialogue within the legislature and in the community. I will push for more transparent and accountable government beginning with the legislature. I will call on citizens to take the initiative to become better informed and more actively involved in the affairs of our government. And I will recruit new candidates for the 2009 election and beyond. Our community needs new leaders to step forward in the coming years. We need people who have the long term vision the courage and the commitment to keep our Commonwealth moving forward to a more just and prosperous future. None of us in the Commonwealth can afford to be complacent not now and not in the years to come. We have a lot of work to do and it should not only be up to the people in government to figure out what needs to be done and how. I call on all citizens to join in that effort each doing our part in any honest and civic minded way that we choose. As always I am to open ideas, advice, questions, and criticism. My cell phone number is 483-3935, my email is tinasablan@gmail.com and for the next two years my office is here. Before I close I would like to say that I am deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve in the

Sixteenth Legislature. To all who assisted my campaign on one way or another, to all who helped ensur a fair and free election and who exercised their right to vote and to all the members of the community and the visiting dignitaries who have come to witness this Inaugural Ceremony today, thank you. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you Representative Sablan. I now recognize Representative Hofschneider.

Representative Hofschneider: *Buenas Tatdes para todus hamyo espesiatmente si Señor Archbishop Anthony Apuron, Pale' Jesse, Reverend Kinsella, Washington Representative Tenorio, former Speaker Joe Lifoifoi, and distinguished members especially from the Office of Insular Affairs. I will speak in vernacular for a few minutes. Hunggan bai hu nae dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase para i familiaku yan hamyo todus ni man manayuda espesiatmente un taotao -- ni ha unselfishly taya ni ha huchom mataña osino ha nae yo' i tatalo'ña -- si Tom Saures. Inutet lao sigi ha di ha aligao taimanu para i kinalamten i Precinct 3 espesiatmente. Si Yu'us Ma'ase Tom. I mas tat kilo' na problema ya ni uno siña hu alok na nu buenti guaha che'luña osino kompetensia i este na asuntun i kandet, i CUC. Gi halom i mamaila' na simana osino dos simana bai hu huyong ya bai hu apela giya hamyo na ta fan unkorason ta fan a'sappota. Guine gi alacha biente singko años ni ta subsidize este i garment ya ni uno u duda na maolek yan dangkulu na benifisio, guaha loddue dangkulu ha rikuetdo hit i basula yan i mas i asuntu i puntu i gobiernamento yan este na komunidad ha katga ha sappota kumeke'ilek hu ta subsidize guine gi kalaguakta yan todú i man masangan-ta interumundo gi gaseta maolek yan baba. Hu kekesangan para i mamaila para bai hu na fan hassu hamyo bai hu chule' este na opottunidad ya bai tommo padiset hamyo gi 1983 anai ma establisi i Commonwealth officiatmente, guaha siha na tano'-ta na ma atkila: Tinian, Farallon De Mendinilla yan i American Memorial Park. Ginen enao man ma apase hit trosu yan pot para u guaha inadahe ma establisi este Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) para u ma inbesta yan ma u protehi ya u mafañagu i salape' i publiku ginen este siha na atkilon. Loddue patte guenao na salape ni ma diposisita yan ma imbebesta gi otro na lugat, todú i atkilon tano -- Public Land -- desde tinituhon ni pitnetmiti ni Constitution na siña este na dipattamento ha atkila tano miyo ni publiku eyu siha na fengkas intension para u ma adilanta i homestead yan programa taimanu para ma usaña i tano, Land Use Planning. Loddue todú eyu siha na salape' obligao na debidi u ma dibosita gi MPLT. Desdi eyu na tiempo \$68 million gaige gi pottamuneda. Muna' u abibisa hamyo ni este sa esta hokkok ta guesgues i fondon i satten. Man man a'aliligao hit taimanu para ta fahan i laña-ta para u na kalamten i makina. Guaha eyu i yaña eyu i tostus gi sanpapa, manñge' eyu puet ya mamaipi ha'. Lao guine gi asunto gi lina'la publiko yanggen esta puru tostus maplantatayi hao nai ya gaige i pottanmuneda na dangkulu sa i prisipio na intension eyu i MPLT para i man ma'maila heneration -- future generation. Desdi 1983 guaha siha guini man matatachong pago na representa iyo i future generation. Lao hafa baliña este, ta sigi'ha muna'dangkulu i pottanmuneda gi anai mismo tiempo ni uno u duda yanggen pomasehu hao gi eyu siha na lugahet i homestead yan en li'e gi halom dos años na tiempo kuantu na taotao-ta man sen kakandit. Hafañelos, famagu'on na man eskekuela taya kandit taya hanom man mamakikilo ha esti siha esti gui ta representa checho ta esti para ta na abansa ta arekla ta na'i ayudo pues ta chule' i salape menos di lamita gi MPLT yan na dañá yan eyu siha na salape man ha'halom gi otro dipattamento lao tampoko i lehislatura osino i Gobietno tampoko i MPLT na kabesa ti ma petmiti para u pacha eyu na salape. Ni uno ma petmiti solu ta faisen hamyo gi special election kao taya guaha ya ta lakñigos i salape-ta pa'go menos di lamita gi halom i MPLT ni i \$68 miyon ya ta subsidize i laña -- ahe' ti para ta subsidize i gasto i gobietnamento -- ya ta yute' pa'pa i presiun i kandit. (End of Tape 2 side B) ...este na inkubukao, na dibati ni ma susedi pa'go kao para ta fan ma federalisa, federalize immigration. I Saina ha pega hit guine na tano desde Guam asta hulo' Farallon de Pajaros. Kwarto sientos miyas este i*

finetdaña. Ni uno u duda na estague chalan-ña i mañglo katda sakkan. I estorian Marianas, i taotao ni mañasaga guine desde tiempo siglo yan siglo gaige gi haga' niha esta yanggen mammaila i taifun matuñgo ha esta nichuka taimanu na distrossu dinangkulonña – typhoon Karen, Supertyphoon Kim – sigenti dia man un korason hit ya ta apela hit guato gi bisinuta, man a'pipit hit, man a'ayuda hit, ta rikohi todú i ambarasu ya ta ta'lon chumo'gue i komunidatta. Enague kualidatña i Chamorro yan Refaluwash guine ni mañasaga gi halom Marianas. Resiliency gi fino' Amerikanu. Munga man ma a'ñaao nui este i federalization. Un tuñgo hafa na man ma a'ñaao hit – ti nahung infotmasion yan kinomprende. Hagas diskuidu nai este siha. Taya esta rason-ta, taya esta difensotta. Hokkok. Lao gi an un komprende i dokumento ni mu establesi i Covenant to Establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas in Political Union with the United State of America klaru i chalanña este. Un tiempo yanggen ha disidi i fedirat na matto i tiempo na para u maneha i asunton immigration, gaige na hagas mañgontrata hit, man a'go'te hit kannai, ma fitma, ta komprede. Ma nae hit pribilehu – ti direchu – para ta manehan maisa-hit. Bente años, guaha minaulegña lao meggai lokkue linache-ta. Yanggen ta atituyi desde tutuhon muna'maolek sisteman edukasion, ti nisisario ta fan dibabati osino ta fan ma a'ñaao ni i asunton fedirat pot immigration. Sa hafa?—Hemplu. Yanggen baba i sisteman edukasion ya un konne' un patgon ya un pega giya Los Angeles, California or New York pat manu an dangkulu na suida eyu na patgon makkat tumogi gi dos adengña ya makkat mu la'la'. Lao yanggen maolek i sisteman edukasion ya ta fana'gue famagu'on-ta ya ta nae ni dinanche na matiriat, ni manu gi interu mundo ni para u ma'ñaao para u la'la', para u togi. Sa hafa – ta eduka. Man ma'ñaao hit pa'go sa ti nahung infotmasion pot federalization. Enao ha i mina'ñaao-ta. Dalai ya sen baba. Guam, U.S. Immigration yan todú i Stadius Unidos. Dalai ya an humalom i fedirat sen baba ha, a sen puno'hit. Ti matto china guenao. Pues na nega este na asunto gi lina'la'ta sa guaha mas impottante gi lina'la'ta. Ha chuchule' tiempo-ta man atgumento sin dibuenamente. Briefly, Mr. Speaker and members, and ladies and gentlemen. For the benefit of our guests, there are two things that I wanted to appeal to you. One is to first give you a fast track understanding of who we are here – the people of the Commonwealth. We are a group of people calling ourselves Chamorros and Carolinians and we are blessed that we are living here in the Marianas chain from Guam all the way to Farallon de Pajaros. If you notice the history and the circumstances here, it is almost assured that every year a typhoon hits us or a super typhoon of 200 miles an hour devastating the islands, crippling infrastructures, impacting the economy, disheartening the community, all those, but yet the distinct quality that is distinguishable about the people that live here is the resiliency. We pick ourselves up. We are accustomed to it. I am saying this in relation of federalizing immigration. I spoke in the mother tongue that federalization should not be feared at all. It is clearly and plainly written and understood that the privilege to manage immigration locally is a privilege and not a right. We may argue, we may sit on a round table and pitch for continuance nonetheless, I think it is taking focus away from the real jobs and the real problems that we here locally must be focusing on. The increase or the influx of Chinese for instance has prompted to many quarters to think and agree that the reason for the sellout of the Japanese investment is due to that. The departure of the lack of marketing interest by the tourism giants in Japan prompts the airlines to look the other way and market other destinations. So we ask ourselves: what did we do wrong? We were feeding and nurturing the hen that laid the golden egg – tourism – for many years. We started neglecting because we took for granted that that goose will continue to lay the golden egg. Lo and behold, it is not the case. So from the Federal side, I think that it is most appropriate for the leaders of the Commonwealth to solicit assistance particularly in the area of aviation. There seem to be a cohorts or collusion: first, with the departure of Continental Micronesia and the departure of Japan Airlines and now the cutbacks of all the other airlines including Northwest Airlines sporatically attempting to return. So I think the issue of what I am saying is to appeal to you, to appeal to the Federal level to assist us in the issue of aviation. On the issue of immigration, I think we have to rise above the issue. It is our job to articulate to the very people including those who are stubborn to understand that the

issue is really a privilege issue and we should move along and focus on cleaning the islands, rebuilding the economy and those that are within our grasp. Those on the outside the economy, we appeal to the most appropriate entities and I am appealing on behalf of the Commonwealth to put that on the list of requests and assist us in getting the airlines back regularly, not sporadically. It injures the economy. With that, Mr. Speaker and members, thank you. (Applause)

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you. Representative Hocog, you requested for a few minutes after Representative Hofschneider.

Representative Hocog: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very excited to move forward with work and I forgot to recognize my dear lovely wife behind me. I apologize to my dear wife, please stand up. I would like to introduce my wife Villia and my daughter Viola, my son Victor Val and other two daughters out in the Gallery, Verilyn and Velyn. They all flew in to see this very nice and new formulation of the Sixteenth Legislature. Mr. Speaker, one more thing before I forget – it has been 20 years since I have been away from the legislature and I am very happy, Mr. Speaker, that I came in with 20 members. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Welcome back. I guess that leaves me to give my statement. Your Excellency Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Apuron, Governor Fitial, Lieutenant Villagomez, if you are still here, Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio, Associate Judge Wiseman, Mr. Nick Pula, Director of the Office of Insular Affairs, welcome, Former Speaker Joe Lifofoi, distinguished guests, friends, families, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for joining us today for the swearing in ceremony of the members in the Organization Session of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. First let me extend my sincere gratitude to my family, my wife Wella, my mother Maria, my siblings and all the members of my immediate family for their unconditional support over the eight years that I have been in this business of being an elected leader. It is not easy, I know, but they continue to give me their support. I thank you. Fellow representatives, I rise today both humbled and honored by this opportunity to serve as the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. It is a privilege. It comes with noble responsibility of service, dedication and commitment. My fellow colleagues, we face a crisis of confidence in government. People will tell you that they have lost faith and that they see Capitol Hill as a place with well-connected friends are enriched, politicians that make promises they do not keep, and decisions are made regardless on the consequences on the daily struggles and plights of families and businesses. Our people are deserving of so much more from its leaders. I call on all of you to restore the people's confidence. We do this by making government a staunch defender of fairness and opportunity for all. We do this by making government come through on its promises for a better and prosperous Commonwealth. We do this by making government a reflection of what is good and what is right about the Commonwealth. We do this by making government an institution that everyone can be proud to call their own. Let us be inspired by the wisdom of Senator Margaret Chase Smith as she describes what public service means to her. I quote: "Public service must be more than doing job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the nation with full recognition, that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration and the constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, and that honor is to be earned, not bought." By grand design, our constitution calls for the election of the House of Representatives every two years. The founders of this Commonwealth intended that the House have the quickest turnover rate of new leaders. Those of us who are returning members can vouch for that. It takes you one year to work and guess what – you are running the next January. When we say that the basic duty of the House is to serve as voice of the people, that is not mere rhetoric. It is the constitutional truth. Here in the

House our basic responsibility is to listen to the concerns of the people, to debate the issues and at the end to resolve the problems we face. Of the issues facing us rising CUC power rates is one concern that people have expressed to me to the sense of urgency and rightly so. When families have seen their disposable income being wiped away by the cost of their monthly CUC billings, many struggle to keep their lights on while at the same time provide enough food on the table for their families. Take a drive a night through several homestead communities and you will see that almost half of these communities are without power. It is imperative that we focus our attention on this pressing issue. We cannot expect families and businesses to continue to pay for high power bills on what little is left in their stretched budget to pay for this necessity. Already these high power rates have become unaffordable to many of our people. That being said, we must first acknowledge that the energy crisis is global and we are not the only community feeling the impact of high fuel prices. We should support conservation measures and going green to lessen our dependence on imported oil. As a government, we must explore all options shortterm and longterm, even consider subsidy, if necessary. We must explore alternative energy sources with the objective of assessing a sustainable power rate on consumers. My colleagues, the time for action, the right action is now. We need a plan to succeed not a shoot from the hip strategy destined to fail but one that strives for sustainable growth. Let us get back with our capital improvement projects and infrastructure building. We cannot let millions of dollars of CIP money sit idle somewhere in New York for nearly a decade while our power plants need major rehabilitation, our waste water systems are overloaded, and our water systems are still in deplorable condition. We need a new policy mindset that does away with the notion of parochial island politics as it results in wasteful spending on ill-conceived projects and in the end we all end up paying for it dearly. Let us also advance initiative to put our economy on a way to recovery. We need a fiercely competitive destination market, our tourism industry and promotional efforts must be enhanced by the unique and distinctive culture of the Northern Marianas. We must also develop and follow through the concrete plans to seize opportunities and take advantage of the military buildup in Guam. This will require additional promotional funding for MVA. MVA must be also put to task and be held accountable to develop plans and showcase the unique culture of islands in our visitor facility which will set us apart from the rest of the world. Let us continue to attract new foreign investments to the islands. If necessary, we must give consideration to reviewing the land alienation provision of the Covenant. This will require balancing on one hand the need to attract new investment, and on the other the potential for displacement and dispossession of Northern Marianas descent people from their ancestral lands. We need frank, open, and thorough discussion in the community on this issue, and we should not rush to decide on this important issue. There should be no eleventh hour arm-twisting, and no economic blackmail. Any decision that we make in the 16th Legislature must be well-informed of all possible aspects and consequences of our decisions. Finally, we must not forget our constitutional commitment to our children's education. When we do not provide basic school supplies, when we do not provide adequate facilities, when we do not place schools as a budget priority we endanger our livelihood, our future, and our ability to inspire our young children to work harder and to strive to be better citizens. I challenge you, my colleagues, not to shortchange the education of our children. We should look to provide the necessary funds for our Public School System and the whole secondary education programs. I know I have laid so many problems on the table. Solving these problems require commitment, serious commitment and not just from this Legislature but also from the Administration across the way and the entire Commonwealth. We are a community, small by many standards. We understand that to get things done right we will need to be on consensus. This will require not just talking but also listening. Building consensus will also call for mutual respect amongst the leadership of this Commonwealth for our divergent points of view. We can accomplish so much more when we listen to and respect each other. Regardless of where we stand on certain issues, I pledge to you today that I will be an advocate of cooperation, but I will work hand-in-hand

with my fellow colleagues to serve the best interest of our people. The Commonwealth was founded on hopes for better future in political union with the United States. Eloquently expressed in the preamble, it is our Constitution that is the embodiment of our tradition and hopes in political union with the United States. Disagreeing as we may with the United States Congress and the Federal Administration on immigration, minimum wage, and other issues we must remember that our political relationship with the United States of America is the bedrock of our government. Let us forge a new and improved relationship with the Federal Government as we open the channels of communication based on mutual respect and stability. We do this for ourselves and for the brave young men and women who are members of the Armed Forces who have pledged their lives to protect freedom and democracy throughout the world. The 16th Legislature can be a start of a new and great Commonwealth. As leaders we must be open to the thought of thinking outside the box and trying new things. I say this because in the coming two years business of the legislature cannot be as usual if we are to make a difference. We must forge a way of new policymaking, a new way of prioritizing the needs of the Commonwealth together as a whole. Saipan, Rota, Tinian and the Northern Islands, we are all together in this venture called the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. We must work together. When that time comes, we must share in the suffering together and in good times we must all reap the benefits of our work together. In these past two years, we have felt the pain of our shrinking economy. We continue to watch the exodus of people and businesses leaving our shores to neighboring islands and other countries in search of better and more prosperous lives. Let us work together to improve both the living conditions and business climate of our communities. We need to keep our people here and we can only do so by giving them meaningful opportunities to earn a decent living. I will be seeking your participation and cooperation in the coming months as we begin our efforts to build a better Commonwealth. As I look around this chamber, I am most impressed by this fact: Each and every member bring into this August Body both unique skills and talent representing and reflecting the diversity and the strength of our community. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best and I quote: “Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You do not have to have a college degree to serve. You do not even have to have make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love and commitment.” So with hearts full of grace and souls generated by love for the people of the Commonwealth and commitment let us show our people that their representatives in 16th Legislature are ready to serve. Thank you, *Olomway, Si Yu’us Ma’ase*. (Applause) I know my speech was lengthy but I would like to take this opportunity to thank several individuals who have nurtured my political career and guided me. I want to thank Mr. Jesus Attao, I want to thank Congressman Heinz Hofschneider, Congressman Ray Tebuteb, Congressman Apatang, Congressman Joe Deleon Guerrero, and I also want to thank Congressman Stanley Torres. I want to personally thank my friend, Congressman Diego Benavente for giving me the courtesy to the Office of the Speakership in the 16th Legislature. Thank you.

Representative Hofschneider: *Un minutu ha’ -- estague mina’ ocho na inauguration ni manmatto i familiaku ya todū i tiempo masangangane yo’ na maleffa hao ta’lo ti un rikognisa ya hu po’polu na todū i tiempo gigon ha’ kumentos yo’ hu rikognisa. Pues para munga na baihu ma lalatde ta’lo gi gima’, i nanan-mame, i nanan i asaguahu si Nan Chong, i asaguahu si Susan, yan uno gi agahu si Hannah. Ni uno hu duda pa’go ya ti siña yo’ ma lalatde gi gima. Si Yu’us Ma’ase.*

Representative Apatang: *Guahu lökkue, Mr. Speaker, mampos excited yo’ anai mana’e yo’ oputunidat para baihu bira yo’ tatte guine. Malago’ yo’ lökkue para baihu na’e Si Yu’us Ma’ase i asagua-hu yan i famaguon-hu siha sa’ antes di election.... (End of Tape 3, Side A) ... I was in the hospital at the time. I want to thank her, I want to thank Congressman Attao, my families and all my supporter and the Committee to Elect David Apatang. Si Yu’us Ma’ase.*

Floor Leader Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Instead of going around the table, perhaps we can enter into the journal that every member of the 16th House of Representatives thanks their spouses and significant other (laughter) so that we can at look at the journal and say yes, it was on the record that we thank our spouses, parents and families, if there is no objection from the Floor.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: We will let you deal with that.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I was asked to announce that immediately after adjournment all the members come up for a group picture. Is there any other announcement, Mr. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Camacho: Respectfully, sir, we invite all the families, friends, committee members, and the general public for refreshments provided for their attendance today.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I now recognize a motion to adjournment.

Representative Hofschneider: Will the benediction come after adjournment?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Camacho: I move to adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded and carried by voic vote

The Inaugural Session of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

BENEDICTION

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Mistress of Ceremony, please.

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Thank you, Speaker Palacios. Please all rise. At this time I ask Reverend Ray Kinsella to deliver the Benediction.

(Reverend Kinselly gave the Benediction.)

Mistress of Ceremony Linda B. Muña: Thank you. Reverend Kinsella. This concludes our Inaugural Ceremony for the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. On behalf of the Legislature Bureau, thank you all for joining us to witness this historical event.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
Evelyn C. Fleming
House Clerk