
Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROMOTION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE THE
HUNGER INCIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY AND ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 9 provides: "The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all";

WHEREAS, according to the Scorecard Report on Hunger released by ActionAid agency, the failure to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving hunger is costing developing countries over \$450 billion per year in lost GDP – more than 10 times the amount the UN estimates would be needed to achieve the MDG hunger targets;

WHEREAS, the scorecard assesses developing countries on four areas of public action: legal commitment to food as a right, investment in agriculture and social protection, and gender equality;

WHEREAS, reduced worker productivity, poor health, and lost education caused by malnourishment were all hitting some of the world's poorest nations in the pocket;

WHEREAS, according to ActionAid chief executive Joanna Kerr, fighting hunger now will be ten times cheaper than ignoring it;

WHEREAS, the report looked at hunger reduction efforts in 28 developing countries and found that majority were failing in their efforts to halve hunger by 2015, which is a key development goal;

WHEREAS, the MDG commits leaders to reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger; the first part refers to people who are living on less than \$1 a day and the second refers to the proportion of people who are undernourished and the proportion of children who are underweight;

WHEREAS, the two regions, which are home to the largest numbers of hungry people, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, have lost the most ground in the wake of the food and financial crises;

WHEREAS, in South Asia, the prevalence of hunger surpassed the MDG 1990 baseline levels last year, gripping more than one in five of the region's people and nearly half of South Asian children remain malnourished;

WHEREAS, even before the food and financial crises pushed hunger to unprecedented highs, malnutrition was the underlying cause of nearly 4.5 million child deaths every year;

WHEREAS, based on recent statistics, an extra 1.2 million children could die unnecessarily between now and 2015, partly as a result of setbacks on hunger; the loss of life caused by hunger is dwarfed by the invisible and permanent loss of human potential;

WHEREAS, childhood hunger causes irreversible damage to mental and physical capacity, cutting a person's lifetime earnings by as much as 20 percent and reducing overall economic output;

WHEREAS, the study proposes that by investing more in local agriculture, governments can feed their people and also regenerate rural economies.

WHEREAS, the biggest impact on reducing hunger and poverty is achieved when governments focus on supporting the small-scale farmers who grow the majority of staple foods consumed locally;

WHEREAS, there are particularly massive gains to be reaped from investing in women farmers, who currently receive hardly any credit or extension advice and seldom enjoy secure rights over land.

WHEREAS, it is imperative to develop and promote well-designed social assistance programs, such as public works employment, cash transfers, food rations, and free school meals since these are important hunger-fighting weapons;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the promotion and development of social assistance programs to reduce the hunger incidence in the country and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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