

9 APR 14 25:36

SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 977

RECEIVED BY



INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF ABACA DISEASE ERADICATION EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IMPROVING FARMERS' PRODUCTIVITY AND UPLIFTING THE INDUSTRY IN KEEPING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS-FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION'S DECLARATION OF YEAR 2009 AS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF NATURAL FIBERS

Whereas, abaca is indigenous to the Philippines and is known worldwide as manila hemp;

Whereas, abaca was widely used for ships' rigging, and pulped to make sturdy manila envelopes during the 19th century;

Whereas, abaca is still being used to make ropes, twines, fishing lines and nets, and sacks, and there is also a flourishing market for abaca clothing, furniture, home décor, textiles, among others;

Whereas, paper made from abaca pulp is likewise used in stencil papers, cigarette filter papers, tea-bags and sausage skins/meat casings, and also in currency paper, like our own banknotes which are comprised of 20% abaca, and Japan's yen which contain up to 70%;

Whereas, abaca fiber is valued for its tensile strength, high porosity, flexibility, durability and resistance to saltwater damage, with a length reaching as much as 3 meters;

Whereas, the Philippines is the world's leading abaca producer, with global share at 85%;

Whereas, abaca earns for the economy about US\$76 million a year;

Whereas, Philippine exports of raw and processed abaca reached \$90.68 million in 2006;

Whereas, the country produced about 60,000 tons of abaca fiber in 2007, while its rival, Ecuador, produced 10,000 tons;

Whereas, about 143,585 hectares are currently planted to fiber crops, 94.7% (or 135,958 has.) of which are planted to abaca;

Whereas, more than 90,000 Filipino farmers grow abaca and about 1.5 million Filipinos depend on it for livelihood;

Whereas, the major abaca-producing regions in the country, ranked accordingly, are Regions VIII (Eastern Visayas), V (Bicol), and XIII (Caraga);

Whereas, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has an abaca expansion program that aims to develop a total of 50,390 hectares between 2004-2010;

Whereas, in recent years, many abaca farms are plagued by bunchy-top, mosaic and bract mosaic viral diseases;

Whereas, bunchy-top is the most deadly of the three viruses that attack abaca, making it unable to grow, and as a result, no fiber could be derived from it;

Whereas, infected abaca farm-areas in the country increased to 28,000 hectares in 2008 from 22,000 hectares in 2002: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status of abaca disease eradication efforts of the Department of Agriculture, with the end in view of improving farmers' productivity and uplifting the industry in keeping with the United Nations-Food and Agriculture Organization's declaration of year 2009 as International Year of Natural Fibers.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator