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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 1457

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE WORSENING  
HUNGER PROBLEM IN THE COUNTRY BY EMPOWERING LOCAL FARMERS'  
CAPACITY IN THE CONTROL OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 21 provides: "The State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform";

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 6657, also known as The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, Section 2 mandates: "The welfare of the landless farmers and farm workers will receive the highest consideration to promote social justice and to move the nation towards sound rural development and industrialization, and the establishment of owner cultivatorship of economic-sized farms as the basis of Philippine agriculture.

To this end, a more equitable distribution and ownership of land, with due regard to the rights of landowners to just compensation and to the ecological needs of the nation, shall be undertaken to provide farmers and farm workers with the opportunity to enhance their dignity and improve the quality of their lives through greater productivity of agricultural lands.[...]

The State shall recognize the right of farmers, farm workers and landowners, as well as cooperatives and other independent farmers' organization, to participate in the planning, organization, and management of the program, and shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing and other support services."

WHEREAS, according to the Food Authority Organization (FAO), the number of hungry people throughout the globe has reached one billion, or a sixth of the world's population, which is a considerable leap from 963 million a year ago;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that of the world's regions, Asia and the Pacific, which is also the most populous, has the highest number of hungry people, with 642 million and this is followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, with 265 million;

WHEREAS, according to a 29 October 2009 article in the *Manila Bulletin*, seven out of ten Filipinos consider themselves poor, an increase of more than four percent from the last survey; this is based on the October poll conducted by research organization Ibon Foundation;

WHEREAS, in the fight against world hunger, the key element is not the increase in food production but change in the control of food production;

WHEREAS, based on the 19 October 2009 report by Alexander Martin Remollino in Bulatlat.com, 70 percent of the world's hungry people live and work on small-scale farms and rural areas;

WHEREAS, according to FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf, the fight against hunger should focus on increasing food production but the opposite has happened due to a decrease in aid and private investments earmarked for agriculture in recent years;

WHEREAS, this may have been due to low food prices, which discouraged investment in agriculture, as well as competition for funds from other aid fields including debt reduction, emergency relief, and population control;

WHEREAS, based on a report from the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), worsening income inequality is a serious concern and poses a significant challenge for agricultural and food systems and agricultural knowledge, science and technology (AKST);

WHEREAS, the uneven distribution of productive natural resources coupled with the lack of access to resources and fair markets for small-scale producers and women in agriculture, result in extreme inequality and increasing poverty;

WHEREAS, compared with the farmers in North America and Europe (NAE), millions of poor people and women in much of the five regions of Central and West Asia and North Africa, East and South Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa, contend with unequal production and market relationships on a daily basis;

WHEREAS, current inequality is exacerbated by the fact that NAE dominates agricultural and rural development resources as well as formal knowledge generation in AKST;

WHEREAS, businesses within NAE have a powerful impact on global consumer demand because they obtain and profit, directly or indirectly, from commodities, landraces and other valuable genetic resources which are stored *ex situ* in other countries, beneficial organisms for biocontrol programs, immigrant labor and have legal and institutional capacities such as intellectual property rights, standards and market regulations;

WHEREAS, landless agricultural labor is at the receiving end of inequitable distribution of productive resources, production practices and technologies plus the fact that there is increasing rural to urban male migration in search of employment in all developing countries;

WHEREAS, social security nets and the provision of non-farm rural or urban employment opportunities are being attempted by countries along with proactive local employment and income generation programs spearheaded by the Corporate Social Organizations (CSOs) but these programs remain limited in both scale and scope;

WHEREAS, all five regions are also acutely conscious of increasing indigence and social exclusion of several indigenous and tribal peoples which are repositories of traditional knowledge and fast depleting, but highly valuable knowledge about local ecosystems and processes of change and management

WHEREAS, the selective perception of production requirements and exclusion of or limited attention given to certain agroecosystems, such as dryland agriculture, coastal fisheries, mountain ecosystems, and pastoral systems, worsen the inequality already

compounded by local exploitation, rent seeking and corruption, appropriation of resources of the poor;

WHEREAS, the challenge for development policy and AKST is to develop agricultural and food systems that can reduce income inequalities and ensure fair access to production inputs and knowledge to all;

WHEREAS, the FAO also endeavors to establish a more coherent and effective system of governance of food security at both national and international levels, ensuring that developing countries have a fair chance of competing in world commodity markets and that agricultural support policies do not unfairly distort international trade;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the State to ensure that local farmers can earn incomes comparable to those of secondary and tertiary sector workers and mobilize substantial additional public and private sector investments in agriculture and rural infrastructure, and ensure farmers' access to modern inputs to boost food production and productivity;

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 need to address the worsening hunger problem in the country by empowering local farmers' capacity in the control of food production and distribution.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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