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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P.S.R No. 290

RECEIVED BY: *J*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE UNITED NATION'S CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO HARNESS TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR THE POOR

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 news release from the United Nations (UN) website last 26 September 2013 with the title "UN event highlights need to provide access to financial services to the poor", the international organization stressed the need to need to forge new partnerships that harness technology as a means to facilitate access to financial services to people living in poverty;

WHEREAS, Helen Clark, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) was quoted saying the rapid spread of new information and communications technologies--mobile technologies in particular—is increasingly making more services available to the world's poor;

WHEREAS, she reportedly added that access to mobile phones can be a game changer for some 2.5 billion adults who do not currently have access to financial services;

WHEREAS, the UN official also reportedly said that mobile technology can facilitate access to financial services, which in turn will contribute to poverty alleviation, development, and growth;

WHEREAS, Clark reportedly cited examples of UNDP initiatives in different countries which have used technology for social inclusion:

- The UNDP CARMEN project in Haiti introduced the first ever mobile money transfer mechanism to support post-disaster housing reconstruction;
- In India, UNDP worked with local banks and mobile providers to enable rural workers to open bank accounts remotely
- In Fiji, UNDP and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) supported the country's department of welfare to ensure 24,000 social welfare recipients received their benefits on time without having to undertake long journeys to pick up cash;

WHEREAS, the UN officials said that the future will be digital in support of many and often small everyday activities, and that this move will greatly impact the international organization's post-2015 development agenda of empowering people by shifting from cash to electronic payments;

WHEREAS, Congress should study and consider the UN's recommendation by formulating legislation that will promote the access to information and communication technologies of Filipinos which will facilitate their access to the various government services, one of which is financial services;

WHEREAS, Congress, following UN's recommendations, would also require also amending existing legislation in developing and strengthening the country's information and communication infrastructures, financial institutions, and government programs that grant financial services for the poor;

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 United Nation's call on governments to harness technology as a means to facilitate access to financial services for the poor.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
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