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SENATE

S.B. No. 1707

Introduced by Senator **SONNY ANGARA**

AN ACT PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The United Nations estimated that as of July 2017, the Philippine population already reached 103 million. Our own Commission on Population (POPCOM) meanwhile projected that the number of Filipinos would balloon to nearly 107 million by the end of 2018—reaching 142 million by 2045.

Such a huge and fast-growing population has often been cited as one of the main factors driving the country's enhanced global competitiveness and improving attractiveness to investment. It also poses a burning question that our leadership will need to urgently address—will the country be able to meaningfully provide adequate food and nutrition to present and future generations of Filipinos?

Unfortunately, the Philippines ranked a dismal 79th out of 113 in the 2017 Global Food Security Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), falling behind other poor countries including Guatemala, Honduras, Ghana, and Pakistan. Out of 23 Asia-Pacific countries surveyed, the Philippine was 17th, falling behind Sri Lank and Pakistan.

Specifically, we ranked 77th for food affordability, 80th for food availability, 69th for quality and safety and 101st for resilience. Among the sub-categories, the Philippines ranked first in only one, nutritional standards—pointing perhaps to our perennial problem with being excellent in law-making, but extremely poor in implementation.

Reversing these numbers and improving food security ought to be among the foremost concerns that we as a country should urgently address. Food insecurity is a

complex issue, making it essential that an “all-hands-on-deck” approach is adopted when it comes to solving it.

Several laws may already be in place to deal with the issues of food production and agricultural productivity. The urgency of protecting every Filipinos’ right to food however makes it imperative that a broader legal framework is established to harmonize all of the country’s policies towards making “Zero Hunger” a palpable reality.

Among its many provisions, the proposed measure explicitly lists down governmental obligations of the State to respect, protect, and fulfill every Filipinos’ right to adequate food. This includes the duty to protect every person’s right to adequate food, and “provide guarantees against threats and risks stemming from private actors or societal forces that are controllable by State action”—for instance, by unlawful or irregular rice trading practices.

For the sake of every Filipino, those who are already here and have yet to come, the swift passage and enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



SONNY ANGARA