

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

23 JAN -3 P5:01

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P. S. RES. NO. 394

---

Introduced by Senator JOEL VILLANUEVA

---

**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES TO PREPARE AND PROTECT THE BANANA INDUSTRY FROM THE SPREAD OF THE TR4 FUNGUS AND OTHER DISEASES AND FURTHER EXPAND THE POTENTIAL OF THE BANANA INDUSTRY AS AN EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR IN THE COUNTRY**

**WHEREAS**, the banana industry is a major contributor to the Philippine economy, with the export of fresh bananas representing 1.5% (ranked number 10 among other commodity groups) of the total exports of the country as of the first semester of 2022;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, from July to September 2022, banana production was recorded at 2.36 million metric tons, 49% or 1.16 million of which is the Cavendish variety. Other banana varieties include the (i) lakatan representing 11.6% of total production; (ii) saba at 29.3%; and (iii) other varieties at 10.6%;<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the banana industry is present in all regions of the country, with almost 80% of the production located in Mindanao, more particularly in: (i) Davao Region (Region XI) accounting for 36.3% of the total national banana production; (ii) Northern Mindanao Region (Region X) with 23%; (iii) SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII) with 12.2%; and (iv) Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) with 6.0%.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Highlights of the International Merchandise Trade Statistics of the Philippines, First Semester 2022. PSA. Retrieved from: <https://psa.gov.ph/content/highlights-international-merchandise-trade-statistics-philippines-first-semester-2022> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Major Fruit Corps Quarterly Bulletin July-September 2022 Banana. Volume 16, No. 3. Table 1: Volume of Production for Selected Food Crops, Philippines. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/Major%20Fruit%20Crops%20Quarterly%20Bulletin%2C%20July-September%202022.pdf> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* Table 2: Volume of Production for Banana by Region. PSA.

**WHEREAS**, as of June 2022, the country has more than 276 million banana trees planted in over 441,313.86 hectares. This area is almost twice the total area planted for other top fruit crops in the country, such as the calamansi (planted in 19,423.29 hectares), mango (184,164.28 hectares), and pineapple (64,457.82 hectares);<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, as of 2019, the Philippines is one of the top exporters of banana globally with 4,402.8 thousand tonnes of export, next only to Ecuador, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.<sup>5</sup> More than half of these bananas were exported to China (1,603.2 thousand tonnes), Japan (1,403.9 thousand tonnes) and South Korea (547.9 thousand tonnes). Other destination countries include Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and Iran;<sup>6</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, while the Philippines remained a top exporter of banana next to Ecuador, the FAO noted that the country's volume of banana exports has decreased over the years, from 3.808 million metric tons in 2020 to 2.529 million metric tons in 2021, or a difference of 1.279 million metric tons (or 33.58% decline);<sup>7</sup>

**WHEREAS**, according to FAO, aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, the decrease in production is also due to the spread of TR4 fungus<sup>8</sup> (or the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 or Fusarium Wilt) in Philippine bananas. TR4 is caused by a soil-borne pathogen that could thrive in the soil for years which makes the banana plant unproductive;<sup>9</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in an infographic released by Financial Times, it noted that the TR4 strain is already present in at least 22 countries, including the Philippines, putting at risk the food security and employment of over 400 million people globally. To date, it already caused losses amounting to USD388 million in China, Indonesia and Malaysia alone. Of particular note is that among varieties of banana, the cavendish variety is very vulnerable,<sup>10</sup> the variety that is most commonly grown in the Philippines and which accounts for the biggest volume of banana exports of the country;

**WHEREAS**, aside from the TR4 fungus, the Philippine banana industry is also consistently threatened by other diseases, such as the banana bunchy top disease (BBTD) and Sigatoka.<sup>11</sup> BBTD is considered to be the most dangerous virus disease of bananas in the country affecting the lakatan variety,<sup>12</sup> while Sigatoka causes black streaks in the leaf which in turn severely affects fruits yield;<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* Table 6: Area Planted and Number of Bearing Trees/Hills for Selected Fruit Crops, Philippines, January – June: 2021-2022.

<sup>5</sup> Banana Statistical Compendium 2019. Table 1: World gross exports by country. FAO. Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb0466en/cb0466en.pdf> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* Table 5: Exports by countries of destination 1/.

<sup>7</sup> May 30, 2022. PHL still second-largest banana exporter – FAO. Business Mirror. Retrieved from: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/05/30/phl-still-second-largest-banana-exporter-fao/> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Banana Industry Profile. PCAARD. Retrieved from: <https://ispweb.pcaarrd.dost.gov.ph/isp-commodities/banana/> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klqrcqhLa\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klqrcqhLa_o). Time Stamp 00:46, 1:17, 1:50, 2:09 (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> *Supra* note 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Black Sigatoka. Wikipedia. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_sigatoka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_sigatoka) (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

**WHEREAS**, as of 2016, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) shows that the growing of cavendish banana accounts for the top employment generator in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in the country, creating 47,591 (or 28.8%) jobs compared to the over-all 165,387 jobs in this sector.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the banana industry in Mindanao alone already generated 240,000 jobs as of 2010.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, another 2021 study noted that the banana export industry directly employs 320,000 workers;<sup>16</sup>

**WHEREAS**, considering the significant contribution of the banana export industry to the Philippine economy, there is a need to inquire and review, in aid of legislation, the government-initiated banana export industry roadmap and linkage of SUCs research and development priorities to address the growing threat of various banana diseases and its far-reaching effects to the economy, food security, and employment and livelihood of thousands of Filipinos;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES**, that the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and other appropriate committees of the Senate, to inquire and review, in aid of legislation, the government-initiated banana export industry roadmap and linkage of research activities undertaken by State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and development priorities to address the spread of TR4 fungus and other related diseases affecting banana production, with a view to securing and progressively expanding our market share, strengthen the status of the Philippines as a top exporter of quality bananas around the world, and further expanding the potential of the banana industry as an employment generator in the country.

Adopted,

  
**JOEL VILLANUEVA**

---

<sup>14</sup> 2016 Annual Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (ASPBI) – Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector: Final Results. PSA. Retrieved from: <https://psa.gov.ph/press-releases/id/137804> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Voluntary Code on Good Practices on Decent Work+ in the Banana Industry in Region 11. DOLE. Retrieved from: <https://blr.dole.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RO-11-Banana.pdf> (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).

<sup>16</sup> Gotor, et. al. Banana Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4: How has Biodiversity International contributed to saving the Philippines' banana industry? Retrieved from: [https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/113113/Banana\\_Gotor\\_2021.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/113113/Banana_Gotor_2021.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) (date last accessed: December 27, 2022).