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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 385

Introduced by SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE
OF FOOD SECURITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997 declares that the State shall promote food security by assuring the availability, adequacy, accessibility, and affordability of food supplies to all at all times, and empower the agriculture and fisheries sectors to develop and sustain themselves;

WHEREAS, food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its State of Food Insecurity Report (2001), "exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;"¹

WHEREAS, in November 2022, the headline inflation in the Philippines soared to 8.0 percent, the highest recorded inflation since November 2008. For the same month in 2021, the inflation rate was observed at 3.7 percent. The country's average inflation rate from January to November 2022 stood at 5.6 percent. The biggest driver of inflation is the rising prices of food. The year-on-year growth rate in the index of food and non-alcoholic beverages was recorded at 10 percent in November 2022, from 9.4 percent in the preceding month;²

¹ Philippine Institute of Development Studies (Galang, Ivory Myka). Is Food Supply Accessible, Affordable, and Stable? The State of Food Security in the Philippines. Published in June 2022. Available at <https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/document/pidsdps2221.pdf> (Accessed on 14 December 2022).

² PSA. Summary Inflation Report Consumer Price Index (2018=100): November 2022. Released on 6 December 2022. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/price/summary-inflation-report-consumer-price-index-2018100-november-2022> (Accessed on 13 December 2022).

WHEREAS, amidst the rising prices of food, preliminary results of the Family Income and Expenditures Survey (FIES) show that as of 2021, 18.1 percent or 19.99 million Filipinos whose per capita income are below the poverty threshold of about P12,030 per month for a family of five and cannot sufficiently meet the individual basic food and non-food needs. This is an increase from the 16.7 percent level in 2018;³

WHEREAS, the PSA estimates that among families, 3.50 million Filipino families or 13.2 percent were considered poor in 2021. Meanwhile, the subsistence incidence among families, defined as the proportion of those whose income is not enough to meet even just the basic food needs, was recorded at 3.9 percent, equivalent to 1.04 million poor families below the food poverty line.⁴

WHEREAS, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2022 Global Food Security Index (GFSI), the Philippines ranked 67th overall out of 113 countries in terms of the four dimensions of food security, which are 1) affordability, 2) availability, 3) quality and safety, and 4) sustainability and adaptation. The country performed the worst in terms of sustainability and adaptation, ranking 97th out of 113 countries.⁵ In contrast, the Philippines ranked 64th in 2021 and 73rd in 2020;⁶

WHEREAS, based on the Philippine Institute of Development Studies' (PIDS) assessment on the food security in the Philippines, food security has been included in government laws, policies, and programs, such as the AFMA, since the term was popularized in 1996;⁷

WHEREAS, in terms of food utilization dimension, hunger incidence trend has been going down prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit slowly. In terms of diet quality, only 30 percent of Filipino households were able to meet the recommended level of energy in 2015. In terms of the food affordability dimension, the study found that many Filipino households are unable to consume nutrient-adequate diets due to unaffordability. Citing a 2015 World Bank study, it was found that one out of three households cannot afford nutrient-adequate diet. In terms of physical accessibility, the Philippines recorded scores lower than its ASEAN neighbors. The study states that high transport costs due to poor or inadequate transport/logistics infrastructure are among the factors leading to food unaffordability, especially of raw produce. Meanwhile, it was found that the volume of food available per capita has been increasing. Fresh or semi-fresh food products available on the market are largely produced domestically while beef, pork, and tuna imports have been growing. As for rice, the domestic demand has been growing faster than local production, contributing to the widening supply gap;⁸

³ PSA. Proportion of Poor Filipinos was Recorded at 18.1 Percent in 2021. Released on 15 August 2022. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases/nid/167972> (Accessed on 13 December 2022).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Economist Impact. Global Food Security Index 2022: Philippines. Available at <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/project/food-security-index/explore-countries/philippines> (Accessed on 14 December 2022).

⁶ Op. cit., PIDS

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

WHEREAS, after 25 years since the passage of AFMA in 1997, the goal of achieving food security is yet to be realized. Despite efforts made by government agencies at the forefront of achieving food security in the Philippines, particularly the Department of Agriculture, hunger incidence and the rising food prices in the country are still on alarming levels;

WHEREAS, there is a need for a holistic assessment of all government programs and policies related to food security, including agriculture, fisheries, and nutrition to determine the necessary adjustments in our approach. A more strategic and comprehensive plan, containing measurable and time-bound objectives, are necessary to further strengthen and expedite the realization of our goal;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the state of food security in the Philippines.

Adopted,


JOEL VILLANUEVA 