
Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED POSSIBLE DELISTING OF THE IFUGAO RICE TERRACES AS A UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) WORLD HERITAGE SITE

WHEREAS, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world that are considered to be of outstanding value to humanity; this mandate is embodied in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the UNESCO in 1972;

WHEREAS, in 1995, the UNESCO included the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras in the World Heritage List, saying that “the rice terraces are outstanding examples of living cultural landscapes; they illustrate the traditional techniques and remarkable harmony between humankind and the natural environment”;

WHEREAS, this World Heritage Site, which consists of four clusters of well-preserved rice terraces in Batad and Bangaan in Banaue, Mayoyao Central in Mayoyao, Nagacadan in Kiangan, and Hungduan, have followed “the contours of the mountains such that the fruit of knowledge handed down from one generation to the next, and the expression of sacred traditions and a delicate social balance have helped to create a landscape of great beauty that expresses the harmony between humankind and the environment”;

WHEREAS, in 2001, in its annual review of the state of conservation of sites in the World Heritage list, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided to include the rice terraces in the List of World Heritage in Danger, saying that “the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras is a delicate, evolving cultural landscape; in the absence of a systematic monitoring programme or a comprehensive management plan, it is, at present, impossible to guarantee the preservation and sustainable development of these rice terraces”;

WHEREAS, *The Philippine Star*, in a news article dated 13 September 2007, reported that “Ifugao Gov. Tedoro Baguilat, Jr., is unfazed by the possible delisting of the famed Ifugao Rice Terraces as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its apparent disrepair”;

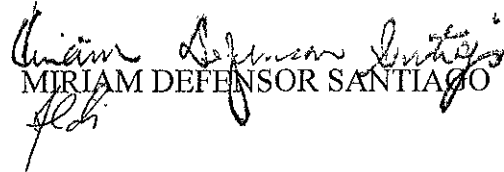
WHEREAS, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines Commissioner Carmen Padilla allegedly claimed that “the famous man-made terraces carved majestically over the Ifugao mountains might no longer be a world heritage site if the government fails to restore its natural grandeur in two years”;

WHEREAS, the report claimed that the UNESCO concern on the deterioration of the rice terraces is due to mismanaged land use plan, presence of structures within the heritage sites, and the absence of a sustainable tourism program;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for effective, decisive, and speedy intervention from the government to preserve the rice terraces as a heritage site and a tourist spot, and to prevent its delisting as a UNESCO World Heritage Site;

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 reported possible delisting of the Ifugao Rice Terraces as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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