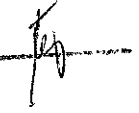


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
First Regular Session

SECRETARY

7 SEP 12 2014

SENATE  
PSR No. 250

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

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**A RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN  
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED DETERIORATION  
OF THE IFUGAO RICE TERRACES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF  
RECOMMENDING REMEDIAL MEASURES TO PRESERVE THE RICE  
TERRACES AND THE TRIBAL RICE FARMERS' HERITAGE.**

*Whereas*, the Ifugao Rice Terraces have been dubbed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" and inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1995 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

*Whereas*, long before its inscription in the World Heritage List, the rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, specifically the Ifugao rice terraces, were given due recognition in 1973 by the Philippine Government as a national landmark for its high world cultural value and as irreplaceable treasures of the country;

*Whereas*, Ifugao Rice Terraces Commission (ITC) was created in 1994 by virtue of Executive Order No. 158 to act as an advisory body to the President on matters affecting the Ifugao Rice Terraces. This was replaced in 1999 with Banaue Rice Terraces Task Force (BRTTF) through Executive Order No. 77 which was mandated to restore, preserve and develop the Ifugao Rice Terraces as well as to prepare a development plan for the same;

*Whereas*, in 2002, BRTTF's responsibilities, functions and assets were transferred to the Provincial Government of Ifugao. This resulted in the creation of the Ifugao Rice Terraces Cultural and Heritage Office (IRTCHO) under the Office of the Provincial Governor, which was later replaced by Ifugao Cultural Heritage Office (ICHO);

*Whereas*, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), after sending a crop specialist to Banaue in the late 1990's to tackle the pests discovered that the worms were damaging the roots produced by germinated rice seeds aside from eroding the terraces by burrowing in their walls. The rats, meanwhile, were eating the rice flower heads and contributing to the terraces' erosion with their burrowing and if left unchecked, the rats could destroy about 75 percent of rice crops;

*Whereas*, according to the same PhilRice report, severe drought and massive deforestation of the highlands protecting the watershed areas that provide water and irrigation to the terraces have also contributed to the terraces' collapse;

*Whereas*, the rice terraces were included in the list of 100 most endangered sites of the World Monument Watch in 1999;

*Whereas*, a UNESCO report, presented in the 2001 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, revealed that many farmers had left, abandoning 25-30 percent of the terraces, and letting their ingenious irrigation system fall into ruin. This abandonment, together with rat and worm pests, threatened to destroy the terraces;

*Whereas*, the same UNESCO report maintained that despite good planning, irregular development is taking place, which threatens to erode the heritage landscape. It further claimed that international assistance has so far not been mobilized to help the area;

*Whereas*, from the same report, UNESCO warned that they could vanish within ten years if destruction of crops and erosion of the rice fields continue. Likewise, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) advised that if ongoing destruction of the terraces is not arrested, widespread damage may be irreversible;

*Whereas*, a Philippine Daily Inquirer article dated 4 December 2007 entitled, "Tourists, Worms Main Threats to Rice Terraces" maintained that migration, the lure of easy tourist money and a plague of giant earthworms imperil the 2,000-year-old structures;

*Whereas*, there is an urgent need to look into the progress of various efforts and initiatives to save the Ifugao Rice Terraces from total degradation;

*Whereas*, there is a necessity to address growing concerns over the many issues surrounding the rapid deterioration of the rice terraces, in order to determine whether remedial measures must be introduced to ensure that the Ifugao Rice Terraces are sustainably placed out of danger;

*Whereas*, for the tribal rice farmers, the preservation of the rice terraces is critical as their continued existence is a testament to their respect for their ancestors and their priceless heritage;

***NOW BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED***, to direct the appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the deterioration of the Ifugao Rice Terraces, with the end in view of recommending remedial measures to preserve the rice terraces and the tribal rice farmers' heritage.

Adopted,

  
**LOREN LEGARDA**  
Senator