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SENATE

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INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

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A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN CALLING FOR AN EMERGENCY ASEAN LEADERS' SUMMIT TO TACKLE THE RICE CRISIS AND TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY IN THE REGION;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has emerged as the world's biggest rice importer and thus most vulnerable to external shocks that could lead to further tightening of rice supply amid soaring prices in the world market;

WHEREAS, the two biggest rice exporting countries, namely Vietnam and Thailand, are members of ASEAN and could give vital advice and inputs to the regional bloc in designing a clear roadmap for food security in the coming months;

WHEREAS, an emergency ASEAN Leaders' Summit on rice and food security will ease the fear and crisis that is gripping both the producing farmers and consumer families across ASEAN and the region;

WHEREAS, it is imperative that ASEAN address and intervene in this crisis to prove to the world that it can take the lead in political and economic integration of its member-nations;

WHEREAS, the ouster of Haiti Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis, in light of widespread anger over rising food prices in his country, manifests the direct link between food security and political stability and must serve as fair warning to global and regional leaders to take rice and food security seriously;

WHEREAS, the ASEAN community has proven that its united efforts could lead towards tangible and substantial solutions, such that during the proliferation of the highly infectious disease respiratory disease, SARS, which affected more than 5,300 people in twenty (20) countries, mostly Asia, the ASEAN Special Leaders' Summit has led to the setting up of a regional information network to help stop the spread of SARS. Similarly, the ASEAN Leaders' Special Meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami disasters in Jakarta, Indonesia paved the way for a joint declaration for the urgent mobilization of additional resources to meet the emergency relief needs of victims in the affected countries.

WHEREAS, a special ASEAN Leaders' Summit on Food Security can be initiated by any member-country based on Paragraph 2 (d) Article 7 of the ASEAN Charter which provides that: "The ASEAN Summit shall address emergency situations affecting ASEAN by taking appropriate actions;" Paragraph 3 (b) of same Article also states that "The ASEAN Summit Meetings shall be convened whenever necessary, as special or *ad hoc* meetings to be chaired by the Member State holding the ASEAN Chairmanship;"

WHEREAS, no less than Dr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, has said in media interviews that, "In the face of food riots around the world like in Africa and Haiti, we really have an emergency" while calling for a summit of global leaders in June to discuss the alarming situation;

WHEREAS, an emergency ASEAN Leaders' Summit on rice and food security will provide clear direction to its members, particularly the Philippines, on how best to approach these problems as a community drawing on the best experts of South East Asia while opening the doors to future partnerships and dialogues with such allies as Japan, South Korea and China;

*NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED*, that the Philippines through the Department of Foreign Affairs initiate talks with member-countries of ASEAN for an emergency ASEAN Leaders' Summit on Rice and Food Security as a concrete step towards stabilizing the region amid high food and rice prices in the world market.

Adopted,

  
M A R ROXAS  
Senator