


9 APR -2 P1:30

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 963



Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, THE REPORT THAT DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS IS ON
THE RISE IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides: Art. 2, Sec. 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;

WHEREAS, in an article in the *Philippine Star* dated 24 March 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) stressed the urgent need for countries to strengthen their health systems to tackle the spread of tuberculosis amid the growing threat of a new strain of drug-resistant Tuberculosis (TB);

WHEREAS, the WHO's Western Pacific regional adviser Pieter van Maaren allegedly said that the Philippines is the second hardest-hit country in the region, with up to 6,000 new cases of drug-resistant TB a year;

WHEREAS, the WHO claimed that new cases of drug-resistant for 2008 are not yet out, but the rate of new infections will "likely be in the same range" as 2007, adding that exact figures are not available, since not all of the cases are diagnosed;

WHEREAS, the WHO warned that tuberculosis is a contagious lung disease that spreads through the air, including through coughing and sneezing, and that drug-resistant TB was more difficult to diagnose, aside from the fact that drugs to treat it were limited and costly, and had more side-effects;

WHEREAS, van Maaren reportedly said that it was a man-made problem caused by insufficient or inappropriate treatment, a result of patients stopping treatment before they are cured; he also allegedly added that many TB patients resorted to self-medication without getting the proper medical advice, allowing the TB bacilli to survive;

WHEREAS, in addition, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific Shin Young Soo reportedly said that despite gains using the WHO-recommended TB control strategy, effective TB control had been hampered by weaknesses in health systems such as chronic staff shortages, inadequate financial resources, low access to quality care, poor laboratory capacity and flawed links between service providers in the public and private sectors;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the WHO recommends the DOTS, which is a strategy focused on detecting at least 70 percent of new smear-positive TB cases, cure some 85 percent of them and prevent 80 percent of TB-related deaths;

WHEREAS, the WHO finally said that to progress, however, people must think bigger and look beyond DOTS to the actual setting in which TB programs operate, the national health system;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to address this issue and institute measures to protect our countrymen from the harmful and deadly effects of drug-resistant tuberculosis;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committees to investigate, in aid of legislation, the report that drug-resistant tuberculosis is on the rise in the Philippines.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/cdr