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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 1256

NEC... 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON ENACTING HUNGER-REDUCTION INITIATIVES
TO ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF FILIPINO FAMILIES WHO EXPERIENCE
INVOLUNTARY HUNGER

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 9 provides: "The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all";

WHEREAS, according to a recent survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) and published in the 27 July 2009 *Manila Bulletin* issue, the number of Filipino families who are experiencing hunger increased to 3.7 million households from 2.9 million families in the past three months;

WHEREAS, the latest SWS figures showed that the proportion of families experiencing involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months rose to 20.3 percent from 15.5 percent in the February 2009 survey;

WHEREAS, this nationwide survey was conducted last June 19 to 22 using face-to-face interviews with 1,500 respondents; the survey has sampling error margins of ± 3 percent for national percentages, ± 6 percent for Metro Manila, Visayas, and Mindanao, and ± 4 percent for Balance Luzon;

WHEREAS, the SWS measure of hunger refers to involuntary suffering because the respondents answer a survey question that specifies hunger due to lack of anything to eat;

WHEREAS, the new hunger figure is only three points lower than the record-high 23.7 percent or an estimated 4.3 million families recorded in December 2008; meanwhile, it is eight points higher than the 10-year average of 12.8 percent;

WHEREAS, also noted in the survey results is that hunger has consistently been in double-digits for five years, since June 2004; SWS explained that the five-point rise in overall hunger between February and June 2009 resulted from a five-point increase in the percentage of Filipinos who have experienced moderate hunger in the past three months;

WHEREAS, moderate hunger refers to those who have experienced it "only once" or "a few times" in the last three months; it went from 11.1 percent or an estimated two million families in February to 16 percent or 2.9 million families in June;

WHEREAS, SWS said the new figure is seven points above the 10-year average of moderate hunger rate of 9.4 percent; the few who did not state their frequency of hunger were also placed in this category;

WHEREAS, with regard to severe hunger, referring to those who have experienced it “often” or “always” in the last three months, it went from 4.4 percent or 810,000 families in February to 4.3 percent or 790,000 families in June; this new rate is just a point above the 10-year average of severe hunger rate of 3.4 percent;

WHEREAS, the survey further pointed out that overall hunger is again highest in Mindanao as it rose sharply by 18 points from 11.7 percent or an estimated 490,000 families in February to 30 percent or an estimated 1.3 million families in June 2009;

WHEREAS, the percentage rose by five points in Metro Manila, from 17.3 percent (estimated 430,000 families) to 22.3 percent (estimated 550,000 families), and by one point in the Visayas, from 19.7 percent (estimated 730,000 families) to 21 percent (estimated 775,000 families);

WHEREAS, SWS noted that overall hunger barely dropped in the rest of Luzon, from 15 percent to 14.3 percent (estimated 1.2 million families);

WHEREAS, for moderate hunger in Mindanao, it rose by 16 points from 9.7 percent in the previous quarter to 25.3 percent at present, which is just three points below the record-high 27.7 percent in December 2008; it also rose by five points in the Visayas, from 13.3 percent to 18.7 percent, and by four points in Metro Manila, from 11.7 percent to 15.3 percent; it hardly moved in the rest of Luzon, from 10.7 percent to 10.2 percent;

WHEREAS, SWS noted that the new moderate hunger figures remain significantly higher than their 10-year averages for all areas except in the rest of Luzon, where its latest score of 10.2 percent is just one point higher than its 10-year average of 9.2 percent;

WHEREAS, severe hunger rose by three points in Mindanao, from 2 percent in February to 4.7 percent in June, and by one point in Metro Manila, from 5.7 percent to 7 percent; it declined by four points in the Visayas, from 6.3 percent in the previous quarter to 2.3 percent at present; it barely declined in the rest of Luzon from 4.3 percent to 4.2 percent.

WHEREAS, the latest severe hunger rate in the Visayas of 2.3 percent is a point lower than its 10-year average of 3.1 percent, while it is almost equal in Mindanao, at 4.7 percent, compared to its 10-year average of 4.5 percent;

WHEREAS, the severe hunger rates for Metro Manila and Balance Luzon remain higher than their 10-year averages;

WHEREAS, these figures reflect the fact that the country still has a long way to go in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals set for 2015 emphasizing on Target 2, which is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by specifying two indicators namely the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age and proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption;

WHEREAS, these poverty and hunger indicators should be used as an objective assessment of the current state of governance in this country and spur the concerted efforts of political leaders, policymakers, civil society and private sector to address the needs of Filipino families;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on enacting hunger-reduction initiatives to address the plight of Filipino families who experience involuntary hunger.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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