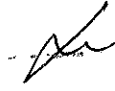


SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 1259

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DWINDLING STATE OF CORAL REEFS IN THE PHILIPPINES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF STRENGTHENING LOCAL INITIATIVE AND INVOLVEMENT FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF OUR CORAL REEFS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE ECOSYSTEM**

*Whereas*, coral reefs are an important coastal ecosystem as they provide food, habitat and protection to many species of fish, which in turn, provide livelihood and sustenance to people;

*Whereas*, experts believe that unless drastic measures are taken, more than half of world's coral reefs will disappear in the next 15 years;

*Whereas*, according to former environment secretary and 1992 recipient of the prestigious 1992 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service, Dr. Angel C. Alcala, about 80-90 percent of the incomes of small island communities come from fisheries, and coral reef fish yields range from 20 to 25 metric tons per square kilometer per year for healthy reefs;

*Whereas*, scientists are warning that reef destruction will have alarming consequences for around 500 million people who rely on coral reefs for their livelihood;

*Whereas*, the Philippines forms part of the so-called Coral Triangle which covers 6.5 million square kilometers, and spans Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands;

*Whereas*, according to international marine watchdog group Reef Check, the Philippines and nearby Indonesia, account for 30 percent of the world's coral reefs;

*Whereas*, Philippine coral reefs contribute more than US\$1 billion to the economy annually;

*Whereas*, coral reef destruction is the worst in the Philippines, where over 70% have been destroyed;

*Whereas*, only 5% of the country's coral reefs can be said to be in good condition and these are the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park in Palawan, Apo Island in Negros Oriental, Apo Reef in Puerto Galera, Mindoro, and Verde Island Passage off Batangas;

*Whereas*, destructive fishing practices are threatening both the diversity and abundance of fish populations that live in the reefs and permanently damage the reefs, like over-fishing, cyanide poisoning, and dynamite fishing;

*Whereas*, rapid population growth and the increasing human pressure on coastal resources have also resulted in the massive degradation of the coral reefs;

*Whereas*, according to Dr. Ellen Pikitch, executive director of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, coral reefs are under siege from many threats, but climate change is among the most serious risks to their survival;

*Whereas*, WWF-Philippines attributed the mass strandings of melon-headed whales in the waters off Pilar and Orani towns in Bataan, and the one in the shores of Odiongan in Romblon early this year to overfishing and coral reef destruction;

*Whereas*, although there are 1,000 marine protected areas (MPAs) within the Philippines, only 20 percent are functioning, per an update circulated by the Southeast Asian Centre of Excellence (SEA CoE) during the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida late last year;

*Whereas*, coral reef ecosystems are often hailed by experts as the rainforests of the seas, but unlike their counterparts, they have not been given much importance by people since they could not be seen: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committees on Environment and Natural Resources, Local Government, and other appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the dwindling state of coral reefs in the Philippines, with the end in view of strengthening local initiative and involvement for the protection and conservation of our coral reefs and the sustainable development of marine ecosystem.

Adopted,

  
MANNY VILLAR  
Senator