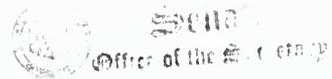


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 JUL -7 P4:32

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: _____

S.B. No. 180

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE
PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE YOUNG FARMERS AND
FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to Article I, Section 21 of the 1987 Constitution, "*The State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform.*" Further, the Constitution provides that the State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on agricultural development and agrarian reform, through Industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets.

However, laggardly poverty reduction numbers in the Philippines are even weaker in the rural sector. Most families in the countryside depend on agriculture as their primary, and often sole, source of income. According to the 2018 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, farmers, fisherfolk, and individuals residing in rural areas posted the highest poverty incidences among the basic sectors at 31.6, 26.2, and 24.5 percent, respectively.

The youth cohort, comprising a huge 40% portion of the Philippine population, more and more often choose to leave their parents' farms, rejecting agriculture-related activities for the more profitable professions available in the cities. The study of Professor Florencia Palis in 2020, entitled "*Aging Filipino Rice Farmers and Their*

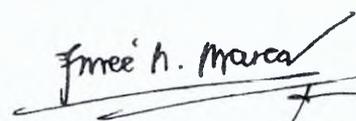
Aspirations for Their Children” places the average age of Filipino farmers at 53 years old., posing a serious threat to national food security by 2030.

As of July 2022, the Philippine youth sector (15 to 40 years old) numbers almost 46 million individuals. According to the Labor Force Survey, the overall youth unemployment rate is 12.3%, significantly higher than national unemployment at 5.7%. The failure to generate jobs and opportunities for the youth is not merely a development obstacle, it also impedes social justice and threatens national security.

By challenging the youth sector to participate in agriculture, this bill seeks to address poverty, inequality, and the lack of social mobility. Until today, young farmers are burdened by their lack of access to knowledge, information and education; the lack of available land to till or affordable credit; a lack of "green jobs", and hardly any consultation or participation venues for the youth in agricultural policy debate and formulation.

This bill seeks to address the myriad problems of the youth in the countryside by decreeing a new Program which, through a whole-of-government approach, undertakes the renewed participation of young farmers and fisherfolk in the development of rural areas.

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


IMEE R. MARCOS

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1.** *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Young Farmers and*
2 *Fisherfolk Challenge Act*".
3

4 **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 recognize and engage the role of the youth in nation building and rural development,
6 providing for this purpose access to knowledge, information and education, access to
7 land, new sources of financial services and capital, green jobs, access to new and niche
8 markets, and participation in policy dialogue.
9

10 **SEC. 3.** *Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.* – There is hereby
11 established a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program, hereinafter referred to
12 as the "*YFFC Program*", that shall support and empower the young farmers and
13 fisherfolk to be active partners in food security and agricultural development and
14 modernization. The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue a career or engage in
15 activities related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk participation in
16 policy formulation and program implementation relative to the agriculture sector, and

1 provide institutional support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of
2 the youth to fully realize their role as agents and partners for development.

3
4 **SEC. 4. Beneficiaries of the YFFC Program.** – The Program is intended to support
5 young farmers and fisherfolk between eighteen (18) to thirty (30) years of age, who
6 are engaged in farming and fisheries activities, and are included in the Registry System
7 for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA). The Department of Agriculture (DA), in
8 coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs) shall update its existing database
9 to reflect these indicators.

10
11 **SEC. 5. Creation of a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council.** – There
12 is hereby created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council, hereinafter
13 referred to as the "Council", to properly oversee the implementation of the Program.
14 The Council shall be composed of the following:

- 15 (a) Secretary of the DA or a duly authorized representative who is at least an
16 Undersecretary, who shall be the Chair;
17 (b) Representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) who shall likewise
18 be an Undersecretary;
19 (c) Representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
20 (d) Representative of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
21 (e) Representative of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
22 (TESDA);
23 (f) Representative of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
24 (g) Representative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
25 (DENR);
26 (h) Representative of the National Youth Commission (NYC);
27 (i) Representative of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP);

28 The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) shall serve as its
29 Secretariat.

30
31 **Sec. 6. Powers and Functions of the Council.** – The Council shall have the following
32 powers and functions:

- 33 a. Formulate the YFFC Program, in consultation with research institutions such as
34 the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in
35 Agriculture (SEARCA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural
36 Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), University of the Philippines
37 - Los Banos (UPLB) and other relevant State Universities and Colleges;
38 b. Develop, in coordination with various departments and agencies, specific action

- 1 plans for unambiguous tasking and quick implementation;
- 2 c. Create special programs for marginalized sectors such as young farmers and
- 3 fisherfolk from urban poor, women, indigenous people, and the Bangsamoro
- 4 Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM);
- 5 d. Develop initiatives in new farm sectors such as "smart farming" farm tourism,
- 6 agro-, aqua-, and hydroponics, organic and boutique vegetables;
- 7 e. Identify relevant training and livelihood budgets in the different departments
- 8 and agencies, including start-up capital;
- 9 f. Implement the departments' and agencies' action plans, engaging the
- 10 assistance of the LGUs and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK);
- 11 g. Identify the best practices in the implementation of the program as well as
- 12 emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming and farm tourism
- 13 in compliance with Republic Act No. 10816, or the "Farm Tourism Development
- 14 Act of 2016";
- 15 h. Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting agricultural
- 16 enterprises of qualified young farmers and fisherfolk entrepreneurs, pursuant to
- 17 Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as the "Innovative Start-up Act of
- 18 2018";
- 19 i. Initiate new packaging, promotion, and marketing events;
- 20 j. Package incentive and recognition programs/awards system;
- 21 k. Ensure participation of young farmers and fisherfolk in agri- and food tourism
- 22 marketing events, nationally and internationally;
- 23 l. Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in areas
- 24 such as "green jobs", reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other
- 25 rural-based jobs, through the DOLE, TESDA, and other livelihood and training
- 26 programs;
- 27 m. Establish linkages with agricultural representatives of the Association of South
- 28 East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other international farming and fisherfolk youth
- 29 associations;
- 30 n. Engage national and international leaders in formulating policies directly
- 31 addressing young farmers and fisherfolk concerns; and
- 32 o. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of this Act as well
- 33 as its impact on the participants and beneficiaries.
- 34

35 **SEC. 7. Access to Knowledge, Information, and Education.** – A whole

36 government approach shall be utilized to inform and enlist young farmers and fisherfolk

37 in agriculture:

38

- 1 a. Role of the DepEd- The DepEd shall include at all levels, but particularly in its K-
2 12 program, elective subjects focused on agriculture, such as garden farming,
3 urban greening, reforestation and coastal management;
4
- 5 b. Role of the TESDA - The TESDA, in coordination with the DICT and the DOST,
6 shall add subjects in their training centers for agricultural entrepreneurship,
7 "smart farming", and other advanced farming technologies, prioritizing programs
8 focused on agriculture;
9
- 10 c. Role of the DOLE - The DOLE shall provide on-the-job training (OJT) programs
11 for young farmers and fisherfolk, including the Special Program for Employment
12 of Students (SPES);
13
- 14 d. Role of the CHED, SUCs, and Agricultural Schools – The CHED, SUCs, and
15 agricultural schools shall provide scholarship grants, stipends, and subsidies to
16 qualified young farmers and fisherfolk. Likewise, the CHED, SUCs, and
17 agricultural schools shall provide schemes for distance, remote, and digital
18 learning. The CHED shall likewise encourage the private colleges and universities
19 to provide similar opportunities and schemes to qualified recipients. The CHED
20 shall include agriculture in its National Service Training Program (NSTP)
21 curriculum, such as garden farming, urban greening, and coastal management.
22 CHED shall likewise promulgate the policies, standards and guidelines for
23 agriculture courses which shall focus on sustainability and the achievement of
24 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Scholarships for post-graduate and
25 doctoral degrees shall be provided by CHED: *Provided*, That private universities
26 and colleges are also enjoined to provide the same.
27
- 28 e. Role of the DA, ATI and PCAF - The DA, through the 4-H Club of the ATI and
29 the Agricultural and Fishery Youthpreneur Council (AFYC) of the PCAF, shall
30 provide for scholarship grants and stipends to qualified young farmers and
31 fisherfolk;
32
- 33 f. Role of the DOST and DICT - The DOST and DICT shall develop portals, utilize
34 social media, and exploit other electronic technologies, to publicize the Program;
35 and
36
- 37 g. Role of the LGU and the SK - The LGU shall inform and enlist the SK who shall
38 act as trainer-leaders to qualified and interested young farmers and fisherfolk.

1
2 **SEC. 8. Access to Land.** – Short-leases, free land, and agrarian reform schemes shall
3 be developed to provide access to land for young farmers:
4

- 5 a. Role of the DENR - The DENR shall explore the possibilities of extending short-
6 term leases of public land to young farmers and fisherfolk, provide free or
7 subsidized land for cultivation, and develop such other packages as would allow
8 young farmers to use available or unutilized agricultural land;
9 b. Role of the DAR - The DAR shall facilitate and expedite the lease, distribution,
10 and award of agrarian reform land;
11 c. Role of the LGU and the SK - The LGU shall help assist the DENR in identifying
12 the young farmers and fisherfolk who shall benefit the lease agreements; and
13 d. Role of the SUCs - Whenever SUCs own or occupy excess landholdings, young
14 farmers shall be given first option to use and cultivate such landholdings for
15 agricultural purposes.
16

17 **SEC. 9. Access to Financial Services.** – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be
18 provided financial assistance and given access to financial services such as loan/s or
19 grant/s:
20

- 21 a. Role of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) - The LBP shall develop favorable
22 financial packages for young farmers and fisherfolk, waiving collateral, salary
23 and other typical bank requisites;
24 b. Role of the DA - The DA shall develop financial packages specifically targeting
25 young farmers and fisherfolk;
26 c. Role of the DTI - The DTI, through the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp),
27 shall extend loans to the young farmers and fisherfolk for the trade and
28 marketing of their agricultural products;
29 d. Role of the DOST, DICT, and DTI - The DOST, DICT, and the DTI, pursuant to
30 Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as the "*Innovative Start-up Act of*
31 *2018*" and other programs shall include agricultural enterprises for qualified
32 young farmers and fisherfolk-entrepreneurs in their incubation efforts;
33 e. Role of CHED and TESDA - CHED and TESDA shall provide financial literacy
34 trainings particularly in handling and managing loans and grants;
35 f. Role of the Private Sector - The private sector is encouraged to subcontract,
36 partner, and extend financial grants, initiate social partnerships and rural
37 development initiatives, as well as mentor young farmers and fisherfolk on
38 livelihood strategies, as part of their corporate social responsibility and other
community participation;

- 1 g. Role of the LGU - The LGU, in coordination with the SK, shall provide funding
2 and livelihood opportunities to young farmers and fisherfolk;
3 h. Role of the SK - The SK, using its ten percent (10%) Development Fund, and
4 other funds, shall provide entrepreneurial and finance packages for young
5 farmers and fisherfolk; and
6 i. Role of the NYC - The NYC, in tandem with potential youth agri-entrepreneurs,
7 shall initiate donation and fundraising drives for the Program, exploiting for this
8 purpose online advertising, "crowd-sourcing", and other digital means to
9 generate funds for the Program.

10
11 **SEC. 10. Access to "Green Jobs."** – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be given
12 priority in access to green jobs, as follows;

- 13 a. Role of the DOLE - The DOLE, through the SPES, shall include "*green jobs*",
14 reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, in
15 cooperation with LGUs. The DOLE shall prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk
16 for employment in job fairs, public projects or private agro-industries and
17 corporations;
18 b. Role of the TESDA – The TESDA shall develop on-the-job trainings, employment
19 bridging initiatives, and private partnerships in producing, processing,
20 packaging, and marketing young farmers and fisherfolk products;
21 c. Role of the DOT - The DOT shall prioritize the employment of young farmers
22 and fisherfolk in eco- and agro-tours, and encourage entrepreneurship in farm
23 and fishery tourism;
24 d. Role of the PEZA - The PEZA shall prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk for jobs
25 in agro-industrial ecozones, provide access to modern farm technology, promote
26 linkages in agriculture-related enterprise, and accelerate the creation of "*green*
27 *jobs*" for young farmers and fisherfolk; and
28 e. The DA and the ATI - The DA, particularly the 4-H Club of the ATI, shall embark
29 upon farming start-ups and provide training/s in new and niche agricultural
30 sectors such as organic farming, agroponics, aguaponics, hydroponics, dairy,
31 livestock, coffee, cacao, and other areas of farming and fishing. The DA and ATI
32 shall also create opportunities for young farmers and fisherfolk to harness their
33 leadership skills.

34
35 **SEC. 11. Access to Markets.** – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall have access to
36 markets through the following:

- 37 a. Role of the DA – The DA shall assist the young farmers and fisherfolk in selling
38 the products through the Kadiwa stores in strategic locations.

- 1 b. Role of the DTI – The DTI shall assist young farmers and fisherfolk in the
- 2 packaging, marketing and promotion of their products, including branding,
- 3 advertising, and subsidizing their participation in trade fairs and exhibits;
- 4 c. Role of the DOST – The DOST shall assist the young farmers and fisherfolk in
- 5 providing assistance and research in the food analysis of the product’s nutritional
- 6 component and content, among others.
- 7 d. Role of the LGU – The LGU shall provide subsidized rental rates for public retail
- 8 areas and public markets, encourage agricultural tourism, and develop other
- 9 opportunities for young farmers and fisherfolk;
- 10 e. Role of the Department of Tourism (DOT) – The DOT shall promote the products
- 11 of young farmers and fisherfolk through tourism conventions, events, and other
- 12 tourist souvenir sales opportunities;
- 13 f. Role of the Private Sector – The private sector is encouraged to market and
- 14 promote the products of young farmers and fisherfolk, as part of their Corporate
- 15 Social Responsibility (CSR) and other development efforts; and
- 16 g. Role of the Government Media – The government media shall promote and
- 17 advertise the products of the YFFC Program.

18
19 **SEC. 12. *Engagement in Policy Dialogue.*** – The young farmers and fisherfolk are
20 encouraged to participate in policy dialogues, as follows:

- 21 a. Role of the NYC - The NYC shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are
- 22 represented in all decision-making bodies relating to the establishment of
- 23 mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the rights of young farmers
- 24 and fisherfolk;
- 25 b. Role of the SK - The SK, through local and Congressional youth representatives,
- 26 shall liaise with the Local Government Leagues and the Congress of the
- 27 Philippines to consult and engage young farmers and fisherfolk in policymaking;
- 28 and
- 29 c. Role of the DA - The DA shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are
- 30 equitably represented and consulted in its decision-making process to fully
- 31 realize the young farmers' and fisherfolk' role as agents and partners for national
- 32 development.

33
34 **SEC. 13. *Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.*** – Subject to the exceptions
35 provided in Sec. 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the "*First-Time*
36 *Jobseekers Assistance Act*" all government agencies and instrumentalities, including
37 government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, and government

1 hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from any young farmers and fisherfolk.
2 *Provided*, That such fee or charge is paid in connection with the application for and the
3 granting of licenses, proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other documents
4 usually required in the course of employment locally or abroad. *Provided, Further*, That
5 the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.

6 **SEC. 14. Annual Report.** – The Council shall submit to the President and to both
7 Houses of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following the
8 effectivity of this Act, a report giving a detailed account on the effective implementation
9 of this Act, and recommended legislation where applicable and necessary.

10
11 **SEC. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from
12 the effectivity of this Act, the DA, in coordination with the DTI, DAR, DOST, DICT,
13 DOLE, and DENR shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation
14 of this Act.

15
16 **SEC. 16. Appropriations.** – The amount needed to initially implement the
17 provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the current year of
18 the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such sums, as may be necessary,
19 for its continued implementation shall be included in the appropriation of the concerned
20 departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

21
22 **SEC. 17. Repealing Clause.** – All provisions of existing laws, orders and
23 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
24 accordingly.

25
26 **SEC. 18. Separability Clause.** – If for any reason any part or provision of this Act
27 shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall
28 not be affected and shall remain in force and effect.

29
30 **Sec. 19. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
31 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,