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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE  
REHABILITATION OF THE COUNTRY'S DAMAGED CORAL REEFS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 states that: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, the Philippines, dubbed as the center of marine biodiversity in the world, has 17,000 sq. km. of coral reefs; however, according to the World Bank, only five percent of the reefs are in excellent conditions; the remaining 95% are either threatened or critical;

WHEREAS, reefs have functions ranging from providing food and shelter to fish and other invertebrates to protecting the shore from erosion;

WHEREAS, in the 20 September 2006 issue of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, it was reported that it will take a hundred years to replenish a tenth of the country's damaged coral reefs;

WHEREAS, according to Porifirio Aliño, coordinator of the MPA Support Network in the Philippines, based on the trend in the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs), it could take up to 2101 to effectively manage the reefs;

WHEREAS, putting up more marine sanctuaries will hasten the coral reef restoration; it has been noted that there is an increasing number of MPAs since the 1970s; from some 50 MPAs, the number rose to 200 in the 1980s and around 500 at present;

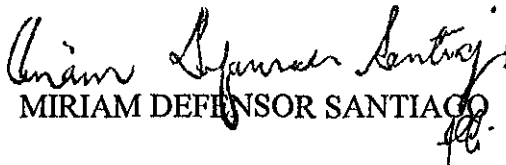
WHEREAS, Aliño is appealing to local government leaders to explain to fisher folks the benefits of having "no-take zones" or areas where fishing, exploration and other activities are prohibited to allow recovery of the reefs and other marine resources;

WHEREAS, when coral reefs die, fish populations disappear; beaches and shorelines are damaged; and fragile land areas become vulnerable to erosion, saltwater intrusion and destruction from waves;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the State to undertake programs and projects that would promote sustainable development, such as the restoration of coral reefs; now be it

RESOLVED, that the proper Senate committee should conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the rehabilitation of the country's damaged coral reefs.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO