

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



Fifteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6035

Introduced by: **HONORABLE ISIDRO T. UNGAB**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to prescribe measures for the attainment of food security and self-sufficiency in the country.

Global warming and climate change has been profoundly detrimental to worldwide agriculture and has been tagged as among the leading causes for the steady decline of global food stocks. With most major food producing countries lessening their food exports to secure their country's domestic food demand, the Philippines needs to adopt an effective and strategic food security program that shall ensure long-term and adequate food supply for the Filipino nation.

Rice is the basic food staple of the Filipino. Thus, in order to attain food security in the Philippines, the country must be, at least, self-sufficient in rice. Ironically, despite the presence of international agricultural research institutions and a mass of highly trained scientific manpower in the country, the Philippines still remains one of the top importers of rice worldwide.

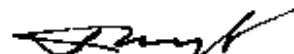
Except for the *Masagana 99*, the rice self-sufficiency program of the government in the 1970's that made the country self-sufficient in rice for a few years, all other food programs implemented by the government failed to achieve long-term rice self-sufficiency for the Philippines. Up to the present, rice self-sufficiency remains an unfulfilled dream of our people.

To achieve sustainable long-term food security for the Filipino people, the government must urgently adopt and implement a comprehensive and strategic plan of action that shall develop and enhance the country's domestic food production capabilities, especially in rice, and bring about economically vibrant communities throughout the country that are self-sufficient in food.

To benefit the majority of Filipinos who are marginalized and underprivileged, this measure must be undertaken in the context of an equitable and sustainable development that warrants for the people in the rural areas of the country, particularly smallholder farmers, broader opportunities for income and livelihood. Recognizing the pivotal role that farmers' play in the pursuit of national food security, the government must enhance and develop their technological and financial capabilities by adopting policies and programs that promote public and private investments in equipment, infrastructure and extension support services that are necessary for the sustainable development of food production in the country.

The challenges of hunger and food insecurity that confront the Filipino nation can be surmounted only by the determined, coordinated and sustained action by both the government and the people, both working towards the common goal of national food security.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly encouraged.



ISIDRO T. UNGAB

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AN ACT
PRESCRIBING MEASURES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY AND
SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE NATIONAL FOOD
SECURITY COUNCIL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION. 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*National Food Security Act.*”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to develop a self-reliant and independent national economy effectively controlled by Filipinos. It is also the policy of the State to ensure that every Filipino has access at all times to affordable and adequate supply of food which is produced within the country through the optimum utilization of the nation’s human and natural resources. Toward this end, the State shall:

- a. Ensure physical, social and economic access of every Filipino to safe, sufficient and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life;
- b. Intensify local food production by empowering smallholder farmers through the provision of improved agricultural technology, good quality seeds, infrastructure, low-cost credit, market, organizational and policy support and other critical support services;
- c. Institutionalize, support and reward local food production and self-sufficiency programs spearheaded by local government units (LGUs) in partnership with national agencies, community-based organizations and the private sector;
- d. Provide timely support for local food production and food distribution

e. Strengthen local institutions in monitoring, reporting and responding to food security and self-sufficiency concerns.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

a. *Agriculture* refers to the growing of crops, animals, fish and other biological products used to sustain life;

b. *Civil society organizations* refer to a collective term for all voluntary, social and civic organizations which are outside of government and public or private, business-oriented institutions;

c. *Extension support* refers to the sharing of technical, market, policy and related advisory or support by public, private and civil society organizations to improve the technical, business and social capabilities of farmers;

d. *Food security* refers to the ability of the State to ensure the availability and affordability of basic food to all Filipinos;

e. *Food self-sufficiency* refers to the ability of the country to domestically produce basic food requirements, such as, rice and other staples, legumes, fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry and livestock in sufficient quantities to meet present and future demand without compromising the environment;

f. *Location-specific technology* refers to a set of agricultural innovations, such as, improved crop varieties and management practices, which are adapted to a certain geographic area or ecosystem;

g. *Media* refers to public or private entities engaged in sharing information through a single or a combination of broadcast, print and web-based channels reaching a mass audience;

h. *Post-production* refers to the stage of crop management immediately following harvest;

i. *Procurement* refers to the acquisition of food products at a fair price to meet

j. *Smallholder farmer* refers to individuals and their families who cultivate not more than two (2) hectare farms with cash crops or livestock and mainly follow a rice-based farming system; and

k. *Social mobilization* refers to a coordinated effort to marshal groups of people and organizations towards a common action to attain desired development objectives.

SEC. 4. *National Food Security Council.* – To promote the above-mentioned policies, there is hereby created under the Office of the President the National Food Security Council (NFSC), hereinafter referred to as the Council. The Council shall serve as the government's main policy-making and coordinating body charged with the attainment of the Philippines' food security and self-sufficiency goals.

The Council shall be composed of the following:

- a. Secretary of Agriculture, as Chairman;
- b. Secretary of Interior and Local Governments;
- c. Secretary of Social Welfare and Development;
- d. Secretary of Budget and Management;
- e. Secretary of Trade and Industry;
- f. President, Land Bank of the Philippines;
- g. Administrator, National Food Authority;
- h. Administrator, National Irrigation Administration;
- i. Press Secretary; and
- j. Executive Director, PhilRice, as members.

The term of office of the chairman and the members of the Council, shall be co-terminus with their office, unless sooner removed for cause, dies or resigns voluntarily.

Members of the Council shall be entitled to representation and transportation allowance in the amount of not less than Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) for every meeting actually attended.

provide the Secretariat which shall assist the Council in the effective performance of its functions.

SEC. 6. *Functions of the NFSC.* – The Council shall exercise the following functions:

- a. Formulate and develop national policies, plans, programs and projects needed to achieve national food security and self-sufficiency in the Philippines;
- b. Develop, adopt, fund and implement the national food security masterplan;
- c. Conduct continuing risks analyses of internal and external factors that affect local food supply;
- d. Allocate and release funding, mobilize other resources and issue guidelines to LGUs in implementing the programs of the NSFM;
- e. Periodically assess internal and external food security risks, the state of rice buffer stocks, other food supply, and the country's preparedness for such risks;
- f. Integrate and synergize various agencies and entities in the implementation of the NSFM; and
- g. Coordinate the implementation of contingency plans for food relief and production during emergencies, disasters and calamities.

SEC. 7. *National Food Security Masterplan (NFSM).* –The Council shall formulate, adopt and implement within six (6) months from the promulgation of this Act, the National Food Security Masterplan to ensure long-term sustainable food security and self-sufficiency of the Philippines. The NFSM shall constitute the framework integrating and streamlining the programs, measures, initiatives and reforms of the government towards national food stability and self-sufficiency.

The NFSM shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. Every Filipino has the right to have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food;
- b. The attainment of sustainable national food security and self-sufficiency is the

c. Effective research, extension and marketing support services for smallholder farmers and other stakeholders involved in food production are the keys in attaining sustainable food security and self-sufficiency in the country;

d. National policies conducive to agricultural productivity are indispensable for the achievement of national food security and self-sufficiency; and

e. Reforms that enable the basic food-production sectors to effectively participate in decision making and management processes that affect their rights, interests and welfare must be pursued.

SEC. 8. *National Food Production Program.* – The Council shall develop a National Food Production Program (NFPP) to be implemented by the concerned national or local government agencies with the following objectives:

a. Attainment of national rice self-sufficiency within the shortest time possible;

b. Empowerment to local governments and institutions in planning and implementing the NFPP with effective extension support services to smallholder farmers;

c. Enhanced capacities of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the local government units (LGUs) in participatory and farmer-centered agricultural research for development planning and implementation;

d. Self-sufficiency in food of farming communities all over the country;

e. Improved crop-livestock-fish management systems in all barangays;

f. Establishment of an efficient and effective national system for post-harvest handling; storage, and distribution, particularly reduction of inter-island food transport costs;

g. Nationwide deployment of teams of highly competent and skilled agricultural extension workers (AEWs), subject matter specialists and lead farmers in all the food producing provinces; and

provincial governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in planning and implementing the NFPP.

SEC. 9. *Target Areas.* – For a more strategic technical and management intervention towards food self-sufficiency, the NFPP shall systematically map the different food production areas, assess risks and opportunities, and identify local interventions in consultation with stakeholders as specified in a subsequent sub-section.

Priority shall be given to the following areas:

- a. Irrigated areas or clusters with average rice yields of more than 4.5 tons per hectare
- b. Irrigated areas with average rice yields of more than 2.5 but less than 4.5 tons per hectare
- c. Rainfed areas with average rice yields of more than 2.5 tons per hectare
- d. Smallhold areas producing other staple crops, local fruits and vegetables.

SEC. 10. *Integrated Support Services.* – The following support services shall be mobilized and sustained by NFPP implementing agencies in the target areas identified in the previous section:

a. **Irrigation and Drainage System.** The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) shall continue to plan, design, develop, rehabilitate, and improve irrigation facilities. In addition, NIA shall include a drainage system in all irrigation system designs especially in flood-prone areas. To ensure the efficient operation of all irrigation facilities, the NIA shall develop and implement a program to help irrigators' associations (IA) improve the operation and maintenance of irrigation facilities including providing grants or soft loans to enhance and rehabilitate such facilities.

b. **Credit.** An efficient credit delivery system guided by a sound rural credit policy geared towards the needs of smallholder farmers shall be established. Its features shall include, among others, a subsidized credit for smallholder farmers with a maximum

all service, penalty and other charges. It shall also include minimum collateral requirements, reasonable payment terms, expeditious loan documentation and processing procedures.

c. **Location-Specific Technology Development.** Appropriate location-specific intervention shall be pursued to effectively address specific needs of farmers in the different rice growing areas due to the varied agro-climatic conditions which vary from province to province resulting to great variability in the performance of rice varieties and crop production technologies.

d. **Farmer-Centered and Clustered Extension Services.** Agricultural extension workers (AEWs) shall be mobilized to facilitate discussions with local farmers to identify constraints to sustainable food production development in their localities and determine the appropriate measures to address them. Farmers shall decide what rice variety or crop management practice to use in their farms. Moreover, training courses to be offered and conducted shall focus on problems identified by the farmers themselves during assessment and planning with AEWs.

e. **Communication and Social Mobilization.** The President shall spearhead the advocacy for rice self-sufficiency. The Secretary of Agriculture and all heads of relevant national agencies and bureaus shall provide the necessary support in pursuit of this advocacy. The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) shall harness all national media networks including local print and broadcast media in support of this initiative. Local government officials shall likewise provide support by conducting local information campaigns that focus on enhancing local food production in their areas.

SEC. 11. ***Post Production Initiatives.*** –The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall give priority to the establishment of post-harvest support systems in the form of storage facilities, solar dryers and other post-harvest equipment for smallholder farmers and their organizations. The DA shall allocate ten percent (10%) of its budgetary allocation for post-

SEC. 12. ***Procurement and Marketing.*** – A strong national policy supporting the procurement and marketing of smallholder farmers' produce shall be made to enable them to optimize their income. The following measures shall be pursued:

- a. Strengthen the capacity and operations of the National Food Authority (NFA):
 - i. Domestic procurement of palay shall be increased and rice importation for buffer stocking reduced commensurate to increasing rates of self-sufficiency.
 - ii. Procurement by the NFA shall be done only from smallholder farmers and their cooperatives amid transparency measures, such as, posting of NFA beneficiaries on the NFA website shall be done to ensure compliance with the Magna Carta for Small Farmers.
 - iii. The NFA shall maintain a '15-30' buffer stock scheme, with periodic review of mandated volumes by the Council.
 - iv. The NFA shall import only what is needed to secure a 30-day buffer stock. The private sector shall be allowed to import the balance of the deficit with the NFA importing only the balance of the national requirement not brought in by the private sector.
 - v. The release prices of NFA shall be increased annually to eventually approach market prices subject to periodic review by the Council especially upon reaching national self-sufficiency.
 - vi. NFA's consumer price stabilization program shall only be used to moderate price surges and not to keep prices at low levels.
- b. Establish an accessible electronic-based Agricultural Commodity Exchange System that shall serve as the primary mode of marketing assistance for smallholder farmers.
- c. LGUs shall post relevant market information and other related services in the city or municipal public market and other prominent public places so these are readily available for farmers, traders and consumers.

universities and colleges and LGUs, shall intensify the conduct of training courses for farmers' cooperatives on marketing and related areas.

e. With respect to the supply, distribution, marketing and pricing of food products, provide effective and sufficient measures against hoarding and profiteering, especially during periods of calamity and emergency.

f. The devolution of NFA operations shall be carried out initially on a pilot basis through the selective transfer of its provincial and regional warehouses and other facilities to well-organized groups of farmers. Towards this, a sustained program shall be implemented by the DA in developing the capacities of farmers organizations in managing NFA facilities like buying from their members and drying, cleaning, storing and selling their members' produce to NFA and private retailers or traders in market centers.

SEC. 13. Food Trade Reform. – To enhance the growth of the domestic rice industry, the following measures shall be adopted:

a. The quantitative restriction on imported rice shall be allowed to expire on the last day of the year this Act is promulgated and replaced with equivalent tariffs.

b. Rice exports shall be allowed without certification of surplus from the NFA.

c. Strategic partnerships with other rice-producing countries in the ASEAN region shall be strengthened and expanded to lessen risks and costs in trade transactions and emergency buffer stocking.

d. In the context of climate change and the price volatility of agricultural products, tariff schedules shall be reviewed and trade targets due to climate change impacts shall be re-aligned.

SEC. 14. Food Assistance to the Poorest. – To ensure that every Filipino shall have access to adequate, safe and nutritious food the following measures shall be pursued to provide food assistance to the poorest Filipino households:

a. For purposes of the Food Assistance Program the Department of Social

- i. Residents of the poorest municipalities based on 2003 Small Area Estimates (SAE) of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB).
- ii. Households whose economic condition is equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold.
- iii. Households that have children 0-14 years old and have a pregnant woman at the time of assessment.

SEC. 15. ***Food Production and Relief Plan for Calamities and Emergencies.*** – All provincial governments are hereby required to prepare a contingency plan for food relief and production that shall be immediately implemented during calamities and emergencies.

This contingency plan shall include:

- a. Organization and activation of a contingency team;
- b. Crop damage assessment scheme;
- c. Emergency food and seed relief scheme;
- d. Seed production and distribution or exchange scheme;
- e. Training and technical assistance on seed and crop production; and
- f. Communication and social mobilization scheme.

SEC. 16. ***National Calamity Monitoring and Risk Assessment Team.*** – In view of the frequency of typhoons hitting the country, a National Calamity Monitoring and Risk Assessment Team shall be activated by the DA which shall work with the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRCC) for the issuance of warnings, bulletins and damage estimation and assessments. The team shall be equipped with the latest tools available.

SEC. 17. ***Regular Seed Inventory.*** – Provincial governments shall be required to do monthly inventories of available seeds in their respective areas for contingency purposes. These inventories shall be compiled by DA Regional Offices and made available to all LGUs

from unaffected provinces to those which are damaged. These shall be replenished by the recipient provinces upon their recovery.

SEC. 18. ***Expansion of Food Production in Low-Risk Areas.*** – Provincial governments shall increase and support food production in low-risk areas during more favorable cropping periods by encouraging a shift of the main cropping period towards the dry season. This intervention shall include improving infrastructure, such as, expansion of irrigated areas, construction of drainage canals in flood-prone areas and the provision of post-harvest facilities and warehouses.

SEC. 19. ***Technical Advice on Replanting.*** – The DA Regional Offices and PhilRice shall provide advice on the proper timing of replanting after calamities especially during the typhoon months from August to November. Advice shall be provided on which areas would do a quick turnaround planting and those that would follow the regular planting schedule.

SEC. 20. ***Information and Social Mobilization during Calamities.*** – A local and community-based information and communication system for social mobilization during calamities and emergencies shall be developed by LGUs in coordination with regional offices of the PAGASA, Philippine Information Agency (PIA) and the local broadcast media.

SEC. 21. ***Regional Food Security Task Force.*** – A Regional Food Security Task Force shall be constituted in every region of the Philippines with the following members:

- a. Chair of the Regional Development Council, as chairman;
- b. DA Regional Executive Director, as co-chairman;
- c. Provincial Governors;
- d. Regional Director, National Food Authority (NFA);
- e. Regional Director, National Irrigation Administration (NIA);
- f. Regional Director, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- g. Regional Director, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);

- i. Regional Director, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG); as members.

The term of office of the chairman, co-chairman and the members of the Regional Food Security Task Force, shall be co-terminus with their office, unless sooner removed for cause, dies or resigns voluntarily. In case of death, resignation or removal for cause, the new member shall serve only the unexpired term.

Members of the Regional Food Security Task Force shall receive a reasonable per diem which shall not be more than Two thousand pesos (P2,000.00) for every meeting actually attended.

SEC. 22. Functions of the Regional Food Security Task Force. – When the region is self-sufficient in rice, this body shall ensure that the sustainable growth in food production is maintained and self-sufficiency in other basic food is also achieved. This body shall work with the Council to ensure that surplus production in the region will be properly linked to markets in food deficit areas and that fair market prices are maintained during peak harvest periods.

The Regional Food Security Task Force shall have the following functions:

- a. Develop, implement and evaluate a regional food security and self-sufficiency plan and program based on the NFSM and NFPP;
- b. Periodically assess and evaluate food security risks in the region and report these to the Council;
- c. Integrate and synergize the operations of various regional agencies and entities in line with the regional food security and self-sufficiency program;
- d. Coordinate the implementation of contingency plans for food relief and production during emergencies, disasters and calamities within the region; and
- e. Address grievances along the regional food security and self-sufficiency plan and program's implementation.

- a. Provincial Governor, as chairman;
- b. Provincial Agriculturist, as co-chairman;
- c. Municipal Mayors;
- d. Provincial Director, NFA;
- e. Provincial Director, DSWD;
- f. Provincial Director, DILG; as members.

The term of office of the chairman, co-chairman and the members of the Provincial Food Security Task Force, shall be co-terminus with their office, unless sooner removed for cause, dies or resigns voluntarily. In case of death, resignation or removal for cause, the replacement shall serve only the unexpired portion of the term.

The members of the Provincial Food Security Task Force shall receive a per diem which shall not exceed One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) for every meeting actually attended.

SEC. 24. Functions of the Provincial Food Security Task Force. –The Provincial Task Force shall work with the Regional Task Force to ensure that surplus production in the province shall be properly linked to markets in food deficit and that fair market prices are maintained at the farm gate during peak harvest periods.

The Provincial Food Security Task Force shall have the following functions:

- a. Develop, implement and evaluate a provincial food security and self-sufficiency program based on the regional plan and program;
- b. Periodically assess food security risks in the province and feed these to the Regional Food Security Task Force;
- c. Integrate and synergize the operations of various municipal governments and provincial agencies or entities in pursuing the provincial food security and self-sufficiency program;
- d. Coordinate the implementation of contingency plans for food relief and production during emergencies, disasters and calamities within the province; and

SEC. 25. ***National Food Security Fund.*** – The amount of Forty-five million pesos (Php 45,000,000) is hereby appropriated as a special fund for national food security and self-sufficiency for the first year of the implementation of this Act. This appropriation shall augment current allotments for food production, post-production, procurement and public food assistance of implementing agencies.

Henceforth, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hereby mandated to continuously include and release the amount of thirty-five million pesos (Php 35,000,000) as a special fund for national food security and self-sufficiency as part of the President's program of expenditures for submission to Congress.

SEC. 26. ***Regional and Provincial Food Security Fund.*** – The funding for regional and provincial food security and self-sufficiency programs shall be allocated from a special fund for national food security and self-sufficiency and shall be based on the programs submitted and approved by the Regional Food Security Task Forces.

SEC. 27. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue the rules and regulations necessary for its effective implementation.

SEC. 28. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 29. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 30. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,