



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5267**



Introduced by **Honorable ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has a total land area of approximately 30 million hectares of which 9.67 million hectares (32%) are classified as agricultural land. It is also embraced by 220,020,000 hectares of water that is considered to be one of the richest in terms of marine biodiversity. Inland waters too abound with approximately 260,000 hectares being used for aquaculture.

According to the April 2016 Labor Force Survey of the Philippines Statistics Authority, 10 million Filipinos are dependent on the utilization and exploitation of our lands and seas. However, the percentage of agriculture-based employment has steadily gone down to 25% from a high of 52% in 1980.¹ The shift of employment to the industry and services sectors may be an indicator of a modernizing economy but what should alarm the government is the gradual ageing of our farm workers that is foreseen to threaten the country's food security. In 2013, the average age of Filipino farmers was 57. This means that, if no new bloods enter the sector, the Philippines could possibly run out of food producers in less than two decades!

This alarming situation is primarily due to the lack of interest of the youth to engage into farming or fishing. Most of them do not treat these as serious professions and see these too difficult to do yet financially unrewarding. True enough, in 2011, the average daily wage and salary of farmers and fishermen was only Php 156.8 and Php 178.43 respectively – which are comparable to the daily salary of domestic helpers².

¹ World Bank. Databank. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=PH>

² Jose Ramon G. Albert, Ph.D. How Important is Agriculture in the Economy?
http://www.nscb.gov.ph/beyondthenumbers/2013/04122013_jrga_agri.asp

Poverty incidence is also high among fishermen (41.4%) and farmers (36.7%) and this lamentable condition forces their families to send their children to urban centers to pursue more lucrative careers.³ Those who are usually left to toil the soil and fish the seas are those who have low level of education and are thus less receptive to modern farming/fishing techniques that could boost productivity and adapt to climate change.³

Young farmers also face a number of challenges including lack of access to land, capital, and credit and lack of activities in rural areas that support development endeavors.⁴ It is worth noting, however, that the youth has expressed the desire to stay connected to agriculture if only it is able to provide decent livelihoods that support their family.⁴

In order to address the aforementioned looming crisis, the government must implement measures that will encourage the youth to venture into agriculture and agri-business. One of which is through the implementation of a "National Youth Agripreneurship Program." Agripreneurship, a play of the words "agriculture" and "entrepreneurship," can contribute greatly to the development of rural economies as it is seen to help improve the productivity of farmers and fisher folks, reduce food costs, and increase and diversify income opportunities.⁵ This Program was first introduced by the Committee on Employment of the 11th National Youth Parliament last June 2016.

More than a food security initiative, the proposed Program is seen to transform the youth into active contributors to rural development by being promoters of agricultural value chain development and job generators in the countryside. With the Program geared towards providing a comprehensive and focused government support, it is expected that the young agripreneurs will be able to improve their earning capabilities and consequently encourage more youth to enter into the agriculture and fisheries sector.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE

³ Marilyn M. Elauria, Ph.D. (2015). Farm Land Policy and Financing Program for Young Generation in the Philippines. http://ap.ftc.agnet.org/ap_db.php?id=448

⁴ PAKISAMA (2014). A Magna Carta of Young Farmers: Promoting the Contributions of Young Women and Men Farmers to Family Farming. Retrieved September 21, 2016 from <http://asianfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/5-Young-Farmers.pdf>

⁵ Bairwa, S., Lakra, K., Kushwaha, S., Meena, L., & Kumar, P. (2014, March). Agripreneurship Development as a Tool to Upliftment of Agriculture. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 4(3). Retrieved August 18, 2016, from <http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0314/ijsrp-p2770.pdf>



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AN ACT
CREATING THE NATIONAL YOUTH AGRIPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the
"National Youth Agripreneurship Program Act of 2017."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to enjoin the youth to be active contributors in rural development by encouraging them to engage into agricultural and fisheries production and agri-business activities to support the attainment of food security, promote agricultural value chain development, and boost job generation in the countryside.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined:

- a. Agripreneurship – refers to agriculture- and fisheries-based entrepreneurial endeavors that are fuelled by innovativeness, dynamism, empowerment, and sustainability.
- b. Youth – refers to Filipinos 15-30 years old in accordance to Republic Act 8044 also known as "Youth in Nation Building Act."

SECTION 4. *National Youth Agripreneurship Program.* – There is hereby a National Youth Agripreneurship Program – hereinafter referred to as the Program – that shall promote youth participation in

agricultural and fisheries development through agripreneurship. The Program is open to all youth organizations registered with the National Youth Commission (NYC).

The Program shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. For a youth organization to qualify as beneficiary of the Program it must meet the following requirements:
 1. Completed social preparation activities such as, but not limited to, orientation about the Program, assessment of the community's socio-economic profile and needs, and study on the available agricultural or fishery resources or crop compatibility of lands.
 2. Completed capacity-building programs that shall have assisted them in preparing a comprehensive business plan and trained them in setting up and managing the proposed agri-business endeavor.
 3. Completed a financial literacy program.
- b. Non-collateral credit support, through the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), will be provided to the beneficiaries based on the schedule indicated in the submitted business plan. *Provided, That* the release of tranches to the beneficiaries shall be based on the business plans and subject to evaluation of the monitoring reports.
- c. The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall prioritize the beneficiaries in the provision of grants or assistance such as, but not limited to, seedlings, fertilizers, and other farm inputs, farm/fishery tools and equipment, starting stocks, small irrigation projects, post-harvest facilities, and crop insurance.
- d. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall provide assistance in product development, quality control, and packaging.
- e. The Negosyo Centers shall assist the beneficiaries in promoting their products to the domestic and foreign markets.
- f. The beneficiaries shall be subject to the regular monitoring and review of the Youth Agripreneurship Office. Only those who comply with their respective business plans will be able to continue in the Program.

SECTION 5. *Creation of the Youth Agripreneurship Office.* – There shall be a Youth Agripreneurship Office (YAO) to be established in every region. The YAO shall be attached to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The YAO shall perform the following functions:

- a. Accept and evaluate applications of youth organizations;

- b. Facilitate the conduct of all necessary programs and monitor their completion by all beneficiaries;
- c. Coordinate with the DA, DOST, DTI, and other relevant agencies in the provision of assistance to the beneficiaries based on the approved business plans; and,
- d. Monitor the execution of the business plans and implement remedial measures should the need arise. *Provided, That the YAO shall set a limit on the number of projects to be monitored by each monitoring officer. Provided further, That the YAO shall implement measures to prevent over-familiarization of monitoring officers.*

SECTION 6. *Youth Agripreneurship Fund.* – One Billion Pesos (P1,000,000,000.00) shall be allocated to create the Youth Agripreneurship Fund – hereinafter referred to as the Fund – that shall be managed by the LBP. The Fund shall be used solely to provide loans to the beneficiaries of the Program. All re-payments shall be reverted back to the Fund.

SECTION 7. *Spin-off from Beneficiary Youth Organizations.* – Individual youths or small groups may spin off from their mother youth organization and avail of the benefits of the Program, subject to the same monitoring procedures, upon validation of their capability to engage in agri-business independently.

SECTION 8. *Information Dissemination.* – The Philippine Information Agency, in coordination with the YAO, the DA, and the DOST, shall ensure the proper and adequate information dissemination of the contents and benefits of this Act to pertinent media entities and all cities, municipalities and barangays.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the current budget of the DTI, DA, and DOST. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the succeeding General Appropriations. Act.

SECTION 8. *Congressional Oversight Committee.* — There is hereby created a Congressional Oversight Committee to monitor and oversee the implementation of the provisions of this Act. The Committee shall be composed of six (6) members from the Senate and six (6) members from the House of Representatives with the House Chairperson of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development and Senate Chairperson of Trade, Commerce, and Entrepreneurship as Joint Chairpersons. The five (5) members from each chamber shall be designated by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives respectively. The minority shall have at least two (2) representatives from both chambers.

SECTION 9. *Sunset Review.* — As the need arises, or within three (3) years after its effectivity, the Congressional Oversight Committee shall conduct a sunset review of this Act. The term “sunset review” shall mean a systematic evaluation of the accomplishments and impact of this Act, as well as the performance and organizational structure of its implementing agencies, for purposes of determining remedial legislations.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of Trade and Industry, in consultation with the appropriate agencies as may be deemed necessary, shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days after its approval.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected hereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,