



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 239

Introduced by Rep. Robert Nazal

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK FOR SECURING EVERY FILIPINO'S RIGHT TO ADEQUATE
FOOD, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution “recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being” while, at the same time, mandating the State to “promote social justice in all phases of national development” and to “raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life for all.” The right of every person to adequate food is therefore a constitutional imperative—an obligation inextricably linked to life, dignity, and equal opportunity.

I. MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

1. **Persistent Hunger and Food Insecurity.** The Social Weather Stations (SWS) found that the annual average proportion of Filipino households that experienced involuntary hunger nearly doubled to 20.2 percent in 2024, up from 10.7 percent in 2023. In its most recent March 2025 poll, hunger among poor families spiked further to 35.6 percent—the sharpest month-on-month increase in two decades.
2. **Subsistence (Food-Poor) Incidence.** Official data of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show that in 2023 some 4.3 percent of Filipinos—about 4.8 million individuals—could not even afford the minimum cost of a basic food basket, despite modest gains in overall poverty reduction
3. **Household Food Insecurity.** The 2021 Expanded National Nutrition Survey (ENNS) of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI-DOST) revealed that one in three households ($\approx$ 33 percent) experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, with rural families disproportionately affected (34.5 percent).

4. **Child Malnutrition.** The same ENNS reported that 26.7 percent—or roughly 1 in 4—Filipino children under five were stunted, indicating chronic under-nutrition; wasting affected 5–6 percent, while micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread.
5. **Economic Cost.** According to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Philippines loses an estimated ₱220 billion annually in future productivity due to childhood stunting alone. Every percentage-point reduction in stunting yields significant lifetime earnings gains, underscoring the high economic return of nutrition-focused policies.

II. EXISTING GAPS

- **Fragmented Mandates.** At least fifteen national agencies run food, nutrition, or social protection programmes, but coordination is weak and data systems are not interoperable.
- **Short-Term Responses.** Many interventions (e.g., relief packs, feeding days) treat hunger as an episodic emergency rather than a structural rights issue.
- **Limited Accountability.** No single body tracks compliance with the State's human-rights obligations on food nor evaluates the impact of major policies—such as land conversion or trade rules—on household food access.

III. PURPOSE OF THE MEASURE

The proposed Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2025 seeks to transform disparate, ad-hoc efforts into a coherent, rights-based strategy grounded in clear, time-bound targets and backed by strong institutional and budgetary commitments.

IV. SALIENT FEATURES

1. **Commission on the Right to Adequate Food.** An independent collegial body attached to the Office of the President will spearhead policy formulation, inter-agency coordination, and public accountability.
2. **National Hunger-Reduction Targets.** Mandatory milestones—25 percent reduction in three years; 50 percent in five; 75 percent in eight; and *Zero Hunger* within ten—anchored on PSA and SWS metrics.
3. **Minimum Food Entitlement.** Guarantees a daily diet for food-poor households through calibrated cash, voucher, or in-kind transfers, integrated with existing social safety nets.
4. **Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture & Local Procurement.** Directs the Department of Agriculture and LGUs to prioritise climate-resilient, diversified food production and to source at least 30 percent of school-feeding supplies from small farmers and fisherfolk.
5. **Justiciability and Remedies.** Affirms that freedom from hunger is immediately enforceable; provides civil, administrative, and criminal sanctions for wilful obstruction of food access.
6. **Right-to-Food Impact Statement.** Requires all major laws, trade agreements, and infrastructure projects to undergo ex-ante assessment of their implications on household food security.

V. BENEFITS

1. Human Capital. Reducing stunting by half could boost future workforce productivity by at least ₱110 billion per cohort and raise average adult earnings by 10 percent.
2. Resilience and Social Stability. Rights-based food policies lower the likelihood of civil unrest and mitigate the social costs of disasters by ensuring rapid, standard-compliant emergency feeding.
3. Inclusive Rural Growth. Local procurement mandates generate stable demand for smallholder produce, increasing farm incomes and revitalising provincial economies.

VI. CONCLUSION

Hunger is neither inevitable nor acceptable in a country abundant in natural and human resources. By enshrining the right to adequate food in a robust legal and institutional framework—supported by reliable data, clear targets, and enforceable duties—this measure converts moral urgency into actionable State obligation. Immediate passage of the Right to Adequate Food Framework Act will place the Philippines squarely on the path to *Zero Hunger*, boost economic competitiveness, and uphold the dignity of every Filipino.

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



ROBERT NAZAL
Representative

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 239

Introduced by Rep. Robert Nazal

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK FOR SECURING EVERY FILIPINO'S RIGHT TO ADEQUATE
FOOD, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be cited as the "Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2025."

SEC. 2. Policy Declaration. — The State recognises food as a basic human right, essential for life and dignity. Consistent with Article II, Section 15 of the Constitution and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the State commits to end hunger and malnutrition through laws, budgets and programmes that guarantee regular, safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable food for all persons in the Philippines. Addressing hunger is a duty of government, not an act of charity.

SEC. 3. Purposes. — This Act aims to:

1. Spell out the content of the right to adequate food in clear, actionable terms;
2. Set time-bound national targets for reducing and ultimately eliminating hunger;
3. Create the Commission on the Right to Adequate Food as the lead institution that will coordinate, monitor and report on government action; and
4. Provide remedies when the right is violated and penalties for wilful obstruction of food access.

SEC. 4. Definitions. — For the purposes of this Act:

1. Adequate food means food that is available in sufficient quantities, accessible physically and economically, acceptable culturally, safe for human consumption, and nutritious in line with dietary standards set by the Department of Health (DOH).
2. Hunger refers to a condition where a person or group consistently fails to meet the minimum dietary energy requirement and experiences food deprivation.
3. Severe hunger indicates a situation where a person's lack of food poses an immediate danger to life or health.
4. Vulnerable groups include, but are not limited to, children, pregnant and lactating women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, indigenous cultural communities, displaced families and disaster-stricken households.
5. Food systems cover the entire chain of activities—production, processing, distribution, marketing and waste management—through which food moves from farm to table.
6. Commission refers to the Commission on the Right to Adequate Food created under Section 11 of this Act.

SEC. 5. Elements of the Right. — The right to adequate food embraces four core elements:

(a) Availability — There must be enough food for everyone, produced by either local agriculture, fishing and livestock, or imported when local supply is insufficient.

(b) Accessibility — People must be able to obtain food without discrimination or unreasonable distance, and without sacrificing other basic needs such as housing, health and education.

(c) Adequacy and Acceptability — Food must satisfy nutritional requirements for physical and mental development, respect cultural values, and be free from harmful substances.

(d) Sustainability — Food systems must be managed so that future generations also enjoy adequate food.

SEC. 6. Freedom from Hunger. — The freedom from hunger is an immediate and non-derogable obligation. No public or private entity may hinder any individual's access to food essential for survival. Government must act without delay when people face severe hunger.

SEC. 7. Human-Rights Principles. — Implementation shall observe: (a) participation of stakeholders; (b) accountability of duty-bearers; (c) non-discrimination; (d) transparency; (e) respect for human dignity; (f) empowerment; and (g) adherence to rule of law.

SEC. 8. Non-Discrimination. — Public programmes and private initiatives that deliver food must treat all persons equally, paying special attention to vulnerable groups. Any form of discriminatory pricing, exclusion, or inferior treatment is prohibited.

SEC. 9. Obligations of Government. — Government must:

1. Respect existing access to adequate food by refraining from actions, such as unwarranted land conversion, that undermine food sources;
2. Protect people's access from third-party interference, including unfair trade practices and unsafe food products; and
3. Fulfil the right by facilitating employment, social protection and direct food assistance for persons who cannot secure food on their own.

SEC. 10. National Hunger-Reduction Targets. — Government shall pursue the following national goals based on the Social Weather Stations (SWS) self-rated hunger survey and official nutrition surveys:

1. Year 3: Reduce hunger prevalence by at least 25 percent from the baseline year;
2. Year 5: Achieve a 50 percent reduction;
3. Year 8: Reach a 75 percent reduction; and
4. Year 10: Achieve Zero Hunger nationwide. The Commission shall release an annual scorecard to track progress.

SEC. 11. Creation of the Commission on the Right to Adequate Food. — An independent, collegial body called the Commission on the Right to Adequate Food is hereby created and attached to the Office of the President.

SEC. 12. Composition and Tenure. — The Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and two (2) Commissioners with recognised expertise in nutrition, agriculture, economics or human rights. They shall serve a single, non-renewable term of:

1. Chairperson — ten (10) years;
2. First Commissioner — seven (7) years; and
3. Second Commissioner — five (5) years. Appointments shall observe gender balance where practicable.

SEC. 13. Powers and Functions of the Commission. — The Commission shall:

1. Draft and periodically update a National Food Policy supported by measurable indicators;
2. Align agency budgets and local development plans with hunger-reduction targets;
3. Collect and analyse data on food production, prices and nutrition;
4. Conduct human-rights impact assessments of proposed laws, trade deals and major infrastructure projects that may affect food security;

5. Receive complaints, investigate violations and recommend administrative or criminal action to the proper authorities;
6. Facilitate dialogue among farmers, fishers, private sector, civil society and government;
7. Publish an Annual State of Food Security Report no later than 30 June each year; and
8. Represent the Philippines in regional and international meetings on the right to food.

SEC. 14. Inter-Agency Council. — An Inter-Agency Council on the Right to Adequate Food shall be convened quarterly and chaired by the Commission. It shall include cabinet-level representatives from, among others, the Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Social Welfare, Health, Education, Trade, Environment, Labor, Interior and Local Government, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The Council shall harmonise plans, resolve policy gaps and mobilise resources.

SEC. 15. Local Government Units. — Provincial, city, municipal and barangay governments shall integrate hunger-reduction indicators into their development plans and allocate funds for community kitchens, school-based feeding, urban gardening and disaster food stockpiles, subject to guidelines of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

SEC. 16. Minimum Food Entitlement. — The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall operate or contract programmes, such as cash transfers, food stamps or digital vouchers, to guarantee a minimum daily diet for individuals and families who are food-poor, identified through a transparent and verifiable registry.

SEC. 17. School and Community Feeding. — The Department of Education (DepEd) and local government units shall expand school feeding to cover all kindergarten and elementary learners in public schools, sourcing at least 30 percent of food items from local small farmers and fisherfolk cooperatives.

SEC. 18. Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture. — The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall promote diversified farming, climate-resilient crops and post-harvest facilities, prioritising provinces with high hunger and malnutrition rates.

SEC. 19. Emergency Food Response. — During calamities, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall deploy pre-positioned food packs within 24 hours, guided by Sphere standards on nutrition and food safety. The Commission shall evaluate compliance after each disaster.

SEC. 20. Review of Proposed Policies. — No major policy, programme or project that may significantly affect food systems shall proceed without a Right-to-Food Impact Statement reviewed by the Commission.

SEC. 21. Justiciability. — Any person or group that suffers a violation of the right to adequate food may file a petition before the appropriate court or pursue administrative action under existing rules. Courts shall give such cases priority.

SEC. 22. Penal Provisions. — Any public official or private individual who intentionally blocks, diverts, spoils or adulterates food, or unlawfully destroys crops or fishing grounds, thereby causing severe hunger, shall be punished by prison correccional and a fine of not less than ₱100,000 nor more than ₱2,000,000, without prejudice to the penalties under other laws.

SEC. 23. Civil and Administrative Liability. — Apart from criminal liability, violators shall be liable for damages and may face dismissal from service, cancellation of business permits or other administrative sanctions as provided by law.

SEC. 24. Appropriations. — The amount needed for the first year of implementation shall be charged against the current budgets of concerned agencies. Thereafter, annual requirements shall be included in the General Appropriations Act. The Commission may receive donations, grants and endowments, subject to existing fiscal rules.

SEC. 25. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission shall, in consultation with government agencies, LGUs, civil society and the private sector, draft and publish the IRR.

SEC. 26. Oversight. — A Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the Right to Adequate Food, composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and the House, shall review implementation every two years and recommend amendments.

SEC. 27. Repealing Clause. — All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 28. Separability Clause. — If any section or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in force.

SEC. 29. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.