

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7452

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The persistence of poverty in several provinces of the Philippines remains a major obstacle to achieving inclusive national development. According to the 2023 Full Year Report on Poverty Incidence Among Families by Province of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the five poorest provinces are Zamboanga del Norte, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao del Sur, and Maguindanao.

Despite the implementation of various poverty alleviation programs under Republic Act No. 8425, otherwise known as the “Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act,” and the efforts of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), these provinces continue to rank among the most economically disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas.

The Program provides a structured, area-based intervention to accelerate poverty reduction and promote sustainable development in the five identified provinces. Anchored on the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 and succeeding national development plans, the Program will be implemented in close coordination with regional and provincial development plans to ensure alignment with national priorities and regional strategies.

By institutionalizing a targeted, area-based approach to poverty reduction, this bill complements RA 8425 and strengthens the government’s commitment to inclusive growth, social equity, and sustainable development. It recognizes that poverty is multidimensional and requires coordinated interventions across infrastructure, social services, economic empowerment, peacebuilding, and environmental sustainability

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

ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL RECOVERY AND ACCELERATION PROGRAM TO
REDUCE POVERTY AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE
POOREST PROVINCES IN THE COUNTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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 known as the “*National Recovery and Acceleration Program Act.*”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote inclusive and sustainable development and reduce economic and social disparities across all regions in the country. Toward this end, the State shall formulate and institutionalize targeted interventions for provinces with the highest poverty incidence, aligning provincial development strategies with national, regional, and local development goals. This ensures inclusive growth, promote social justice, and uplift the conditions of the country’s poorest and most marginalized provinces.

SEC. 3. **Objectives.** – This Act aims to:

- (a) Establish a national recovery and acceleration program to reduce poverty incidence in the top five (5) poorest provinces in the country;
- (b) Strengthen infrastructure, connectivity, and access to basic and financial services;
- (c) Strengthen capacity-building and skills development;
- (d) Promote sustainable livelihood, entrepreneurship, and local industries;
- (e) Foster peace, security, and social cohesion; and
- (f) Ensure environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

SEC 4. National Recovery and Acceleration Program. – A National Recovery and Acceleration Program (NRAP) is hereby established under the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), hereinafter referred to as the “Program.”

The Program serves as the framework for equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development, and accelerate inclusive growth and reduce poverty in the five (5) poorest and most disadvantaged provinces of the country as identified by the DEPDev.

SEC. 5. Coverage and Scope of Assistance. – The Program shall cover the top five (5) poorest provinces identified by the DEPDev in consultation with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), using official poverty and deprivation indicators, including poverty incidence, service access deficits, multidimensional deprivation, infrastructure gaps, livelihood vulnerabilities, and exposure to climate and disaster risk.

Targeted provinces shall be granted priority support for a period not exceeding six (6) years from their initial identification under this Act. Such support covers infrastructure, social protection, livelihood, peace and security, environmental sustainability, and other benefits provided under this Act.

The NRAP Inter-Agency Council (NRAP-IC) established under Section 11 of this Act, shall review the eligibility of targeted provinces under the Program every three (3) years based on the latest PSA and DEPDev data.

Provinces whose official poverty incidence falls below the national average anytime within the six (6)-year implementation cycle, shall graduate from the Program, and shall be replaced by newly qualified provinces.

SEC. 6. Program Components – The Program shall have the following components:

- (a) *Support for Infrastructure and Connectivity Development* that aims to enhance inclusive growth, improve mobility and quality of life, and provide efficient connectivity and reliable technological services, particularly for the:
 - (1) Construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of roads, bridges, ports, and other transport facilities to ensure efficient mobility of goods and people;
 - (2) Establishment and expansion of digital infrastructure, including broadband connectivity and information technology hubs, to bridge the digital gap and promote access to e-governance and digital commerce;
 - (3) Development of renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, to provide sustainable and affordable electricity in undersigned areas; and
 - (4) Improvement of potable water supply systems and sanitation facilities to guarantee universal access to safe drinking water and hygienic living conditions.
- (b) *Social Services Enhancement* that aims to provide basic needs and reduce inequality by empowering individuals to reach their full potential. This involves:
 - (1) Provision of universal access to quality healthcare services, including the construction of health care units or facilities and deployment of medical professionals in underserved provinces;

- (2) Expansion of educational opportunities through the construction of schools, provision of scholarships, skills development and capacity-building programs, and integration of digital learning platforms; and
 - (3) Reinforcement of conditional cash transfer programs, nutrition and feeding programs, and other social protection mechanisms to support vulnerable households and promote human capital development.
- (c) *Economic Empowerment* that aims to enable individuals, households, and communities to achieve self-sufficiency, improve livelihoods, and actively participate in sustainable growth. This involves:
- (1) Promotion and support of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through improved access to credit and other financial services, training, and market linkages;
 - (2) Modernization of agriculture and fisheries by providing farmers and fisherfolk with access to modern technologies, post-harvest facilities, and value-chain integration; and
 - (3) Development of tourism and cultural heritage industries by investing in ecotourism sites, cultural preservation programs, and community-based tourism initiatives.
- (d) *Peace and Security Initiatives* that aim to foster stability, strengthen local security, and allow communities to pursue development without fear of conflict or violence. This involves:
- (1) Strengthening of local security mechanisms in partnership with law enforcement agencies to ensure safe and stable environments conducive to development;
 - (2) Implementation of community-based peacebuilding programs that foster dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive participation in governance; and
 - (3) Provision of reintegration support, livelihood assistance, and psychosocial services for individuals and communities affected by armed conflict, with particular attention to displaced populations.
- (e) *Environmental Sustainability* that aims to balance development with ecological stewardship and secure long-term growth. This involves:
- (1) Construction of climate-resilient infrastructure to withstand natural disasters and mitigate the impacts of climate change;
 - (2) Implementation of coastal and marine resource management programs, including mangrove rehabilitation, sustainable fishing practices, and biodiversity conservation; and
 - (3) Promotion of sustainable land use, watershed management, and reforestation initiatives to protect ecosystems and ensure long-term environmental balance.

SEC. 7. Policy Alignment. – The Program shall be harmonized and remain consistent with existing national and local poverty reduction programs currently being undertaken by the government. This includes alignment with the national poverty alleviation

framework and social reform agenda administered by the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), pursuant to RA 8425, or the “Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act.” Such harmonization shall ensure policy coherence, optimize resource utilization, and prevent program and benefits duplication.

Furthermore, the Program shall be anchored on the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 and all succeeding national development plans, and shall be formulated in close coordination with the regional and provincial development plans to guarantee alignment with national priorities and regional strategies for inclusive and sustainable development.

SEC. 8. Lead Implementing Agency. – The DEPDev shall be the Program’s lead implementing agency and, in addition to its existing functions, shall perform the following:

- (a) Formulate and establish mechanisms for the attainment of the objectives of this Act;
- (b) Coordinate and collaborate with national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), the private sector, development partners both local or foreign, and other stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of this Act;
- (c) Prescribe policies and regulations, and enter into contracts to undertake the effective implementation of this Act, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;
- (d) Arrange funding for the Program from any legitimate source, whether private, government, foreign or domestic, including official development assistance, and bilateral or multilateral loans, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;
- (e) Undertake the creation, establishment, construction, maintenance, and operation of infrastructure, equipment, technology, systems or such other requirements necessary for the implementation of this Act;
- (f) Avail of the expertise of any particular employee or group of persons in any bureau, office, or department of the national government whose services are needed for the implementation of this Act; and
- (g) Establish regional or provincial offices, if necessary, for the attainment of the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 9. NRAP Office. – The DEPDev shall create the NRAP Office, and select, appoint, and fix the compensation of its officers and personnel as may be necessary to carry out its powers and functions.

The NRAP Office shall be headed by a Director who is vested with executive powers to manage the affairs and carry out the objectives of the Program.

The Director shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation by the majority of the NRAP-IC, subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations.

SEC. 10. Powers and Functions of the Director. – The Director shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Execute, administer, and implement the policies, plans, programs, and projects approved by the NRAP-IC;
- (b) Manage the day-to-day operation and administration of the Program;
- (c) Submit for consideration of the NRAP-IC such other duties and measures, which the Director believes to be necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of this Act;
- (d) Subject to the guidelines and policies set by the NRAP-IC, prepare the staffing pattern and fix the number of subordinate officials and employees of the NRAP Office in accordance with civil service laws, rules and regulations, and evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and Management;
- (e) Appoint, subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations, all subordinate officers and employees, who shall enjoy security of tenure and may be removed only for cause in accordance with law;
- (f) Prepare the annual budget for the operation of the Program for submission to the NRAP-IC;
- (g) Arrange, negotiate for, facilitate, or accept donations, grants, gifts, loans, and other funding from domestic or foreign sources to carry out the purposes of this Act;
- (h) Prepare at the close of each calendar year an annual report on the operation and status of the Program, including its latest financial statement, for submission to the NRAP-IC;
- (i) Represent the NRAP-IC in all dealings with offices, agencies and instrumentalities of the government and with all persons and other entities, public or private, domestic and foreign; and
- (j) Perform such other functions as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. NRAP Inter-Agency Council. – The NRAP-IC is created to oversee the management and implementation of the Program.

The NRAP-IC is composed of the following:

- (a) Secretary of Economy, Planning, and Development, as chairperson;
- (b) Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, as co-chairperson;
- (c) Secretary of Trade and Industry;
- (d) Secretary of Public Works and Highways;
- (e) Secretary of Social Welfare and Development;
- (f) Secretary of Education;
- (g) Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources;
- (h) Secretary of Information and Communications Technology;

(i) Secretary of Finance;

(j) Two (2) representatives from accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or people's organizations (POs) involved in poverty alleviation programs in any of the five (5) targeted provinces; and

(k) Two (2) representatives from duly recognized cooperatives operating in any of the five (5) targeted provinces, as members.

The representatives from the NGOs, POs, and cooperatives shall hold office for three (3) years from the date of appointment and shall be eligible for reappointment upon completion of the term.

The accredited NGOs, POs, and cooperatives shall choose from among themselves, in a meeting duly called for the purpose, their representatives to the NRAP-IC.

The cabinet-ranked ex officio members of the NRAP-IC shall each designate a representative in case of failure to attend its meetings. The designated representative of any of the Cabinet-ranked members of the NRAP-IC must hold a position not lower than a bureau director.

The chairperson and members of the NRAP-IC or their respective representatives are entitled to receive per diem, allowances, and incentives, for each meeting actually attended at such amount as may be fixed by the NRAP-IC subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.

The NRAP-IC shall call upon the participation of any government agency from time to time to attend its meetings to assist in clarifying issues and finding resolution to problems that concern their respective offices pertinent to the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. Powers and Functions. – The NRAP-IC shall:

(a) Formulate, draft, and implement national policy guidelines for the Program;

(b) Call on any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government, private entities and organizations, for cooperation and assistance in the performance of its functions;

(c) Recommend to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines such matters that may require legislation in support of the objectives of this Act;

(d) Submit annual reports to the Senate and House of Representatives on the progress and impact of the Program;

(e) Approve and allocate funds for priority projects; and

(f) Promulgate such rules and regulations and exercise all the functions and powers necessary or incidental to attain the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 13. Quorum. – A majority of the members of the NRAP-IC shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

SEC. 14. **Partnership Building.** – The NRAP-IC shall facilitate partnerships between public and private stakeholders and program participants to strengthen the implementation of the Program through complementary or supplementary interventions. The partnerships aim to sustain the Program’s initiatives, providing support, develop community-based life skills, and offer technical assistance.

SEC. 15. **Role of LGUs.** – Provincial, city, and municipal governments within the identified provinces shall serve as the frontline implementers of the Program. The LGUs shall coordinate closely with national government agencies to ensure efficient delivery of services, maximize resource utilization, and avoid duplication of efforts. They shall mobilize community participation, provide counterpart funding or resources where feasible, and establish local monitoring mechanisms to track program outcomes.

The DILG shall oversee and provide technical assistance in the performance of their implementing functions.

SEC. 16. **Non-Graduation After Six Years.** – In cases where a province remains below the graduation threshold after six (6) years of continuous inclusion in the Program, the province shall no longer receive exclusive benefits under this Program but shall continue to be covered by regular national poverty alleviation initiatives coordinated by the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) pursuant to RA 8425.

The DEPDev shall, in coordination with NAPC and the concerned Regional Development Council, conduct a comprehensive review to determine the reasons for non-graduation of the province and recommend targeted interventions. Such review shall be submitted to the NRAP-IC for consideration of its assessment of the Program.

SEC. 17. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** – The NRAP-IC shall, in coordination with the NAPC and concerned regional development councils, assess the Program and make an annual report, the results of which shall be utilized to stimulate policy discussions and generate inputs for the improvement of the Program. Mechanisms for promoting third-party monitoring and evaluation by other government agencies and private organizations may also be established.

The NRAP-IC shall submit the report to the President of the Philippines, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing the Program’s accomplishments, financial utilization, and challenges encountered. The report must be published and regularly updated for the information of the public.

The NRAP-IC shall review the Program every six (6) years, to assess its effectiveness and recommend its continuation, modification, or termination.

SEC. 18. **Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriation of the DEPDev. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Economy, Planning and Development shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government and the other members of the NRAP-IC, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 20. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 21. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 22. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,