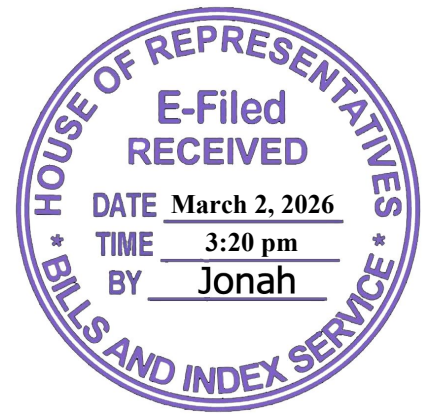


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8205



Introduced by **HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to grant **Benjamin ("Ben") W. Mead** Philippine citizenship with all the rights, privileges, and prerogatives, as well as the duties and obligations appurtenant thereto, under the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

Benjamin W. Mead is a 45-year old Australian, has been a permanent resident of the Philippines since 2015, and married to a Filipina.

Since residing in the Philippines, Ben has been dedicating his time and efforts towards a range of impactful initiatives through his Agriculture-focused enterprises, such as Iba Botanicals Inc, United Agarwood Planters Inc, BioPrime Agri Industries Inc. He also contributes a substantial effort in advancing the charitable initiatives of the Mead Foundation Inc. ("TMFI"), a SEC-registered, non-profit organization of which he serves as founder and Chairman. TMFI advances causes aligned with the Filipino community (health, education, community infrastructure) and the country's environment.

Ben is the founder and CEO of Iba Botanicals, Inc. ("IBI"), a BOI-accredited export enterprise and a pioneer in the production of high-volume and high-value botanical extracts, such as pure essential oils, that exports to large multinational flavor and fragrance companies in Europe and USA. Due to these efforts, the Philippines has become recognized as a reputable global player in the production of these high-value extracts. IBI's extracts have been supplied to fragrance brands such as *Chanel*, *Dior*, and *Victoria's Secret*, consumer goods brands such as *Bath and Body Works*, and wellness companies such as *Young Living* and *doTERRA*. IBI's business showcases both premium Filipino botanical extracts as well as community impact and sustainable practices to global consumers, and exerts great pride in positioning as a dedicated Filipino producer into premium and luxury global markets.

Iba Botanicals has invested more than Php 150 million that provided fulltime employment to more than 140 Filipinos, as well as more than 700 farm workers – a vast majority of which are wither indigenous (Aeta and Lumad) community or returned rebels. Presently, IBI has 3 plantations for its production –280 hectares in Camarines Sur, 230 hectares in Bukidnon and 180 hectares in Zambales, together with associated distillation facilities and laboratories.

Iba Botanicals, through its wholly-owned subsidiary United Agarwood Planters Inc (“UAPI”), is also the leader of the emerging Philippines agarwood industry. Agarwood is a critically endangered tree species that is considered the world’s highest value forest product, is one of the tree species that Ben aims to protect by propagating Agarwood plantations in full compliance with local and international rules and regulations. UAPI has been undertaking the establishment of agarwood plantations at scale, as well as support third-party planters who wish to participate in this new and highly regulated high-value agro-forestry industry. Through these efforts, legal and sustainable agarwood should help to reduce or eliminate the poaching of wild agarwood trees in the Philippines.

Under Ben’s Chairmanship, BioPrime Agri Industries has become the leader in the Philippines BioFertilizer industry; technology that shows great promise to revitalize the soil and accelerate plant growth rates, demonstrating immense impact for Filipino farmers. Since 2018, through a disciplined engagement with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and PhilRice, the product proved to permit Filipino rice and corn farmers to substantially reduce chemical fertilizer whilst increasing yields and earnings significantly. This paved the way for DA to confidently adopt a “balanced fertilization” as the main strategy to address the country’s reliance on imported chemical fertilizer, which benefited thousands of Filipino farmers. The BioPrime Agri Industries, Inc. has likewise employed more than 150 Filipinos.

In fact, during the global pandemic, Ben contributed Php 6 billion of nano bio-fertilizer inventory in the Philippines to ensure his continuous support to the needs of the Filipino farmers with almost 1 million hectares of farmland, providing a valuable tool to counter the emerging fertilizer crisis.

On top of these outstanding performances in the agricultural sector, Ben is likewise prioritizing philanthropic activities as the founder and CEO of ‘The Mead Foundation (“TMF”), a non-profit enterprise with three (3) active divisions: *medical, community development, and environmental conservation*:

- TMF’s medical division offers free cleft lip and palate surgeries for underprivileged Filipinos. As of today, more than 3,500 free surgeries have been performed by both international and local surgeons through its annual medical mission, as well as sponsoring medical cases in government hospitals located within Metro Manila.
- TMF’s community development program has a range of initiatives that supporting communities’ general development, especially for Indigenous Peoples communities, through school infrastructures, clean water systems, disaster relief operations, feeding programs, materials sponsorship, and other related activities.
- TMF’s marine conservation division aims at taking an integrated approach to Marine Protected Area administration, coral reef restoration, livelihood creation and other aligned site-specific efforts such as sea turtle conservation and protection. TMF has undertaken projects in six provinces of the Philippines, with the support of local and international partners such

as the University of the Philippines (UP) and Southern Cross University in Australia.

The Mead Foundation in its 2025 Year-End Impact Review highlighted its accomplishments such as its 'Remote Community Medical Mission' in Divilacan and Maconacon in Isabela with more than 5,900 services performed, 'Earthquake Relief Operations' in Medellin, Cebu, 'AgriKatutubo Scholarship & Career Pathway' scholarship program for agri students, 'Burn Care Donation for Community-Based Medical Response' in Zambales, donated learning equipment and Starlink internet access to Pamplona Integrated School in Del Gallego, Camarines Sur and Poonbato Integrated School in Botolan, Zambales, and its Feeding Programs in Saint Brother Miguel Academy in Antipolo, Rizal and Olongapo City. TMF's ongoing 2026 thrust is to advance the 'Itayo ang Pag-asa Classrooms' program; building climate-resilient and sustainable engineered bamboo school buildings for Indigenous Peoples and underserved communities, with school buildings under development in Camarines Sur and Bukidnon for completion by the end of 2026.

Ben's allegiance to the Philippines is indubitable. His values, goals and wide knowledge, and competency in the field of agriculture shall truly advance the entire nation and its economic development. Thus, providing Ben the rights and privileges of a Filipino citizen is deserving of him.

Thus, with the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is most humbly and earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'V' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8205

Introduced by **HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE,**

AN ACT
GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO BENJAMIN W. MEAD

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

SECTION 1. Benjamin W. Mead is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all the rights, privileges, and prerogatives, as well as the duties and obligations appurtenant thereto, under the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

SEC. 2. Benjamin W. Mead shall take the Oath of Allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before an officer duly authorized to administer the same. The Oath of Allegiance shall be registered with the Bureau of Immigration.

SEC. 3. Upon registration of the Oath of Allegiance, the Bureau of Immigration shall issue a Certificate of Naturalization to Benjamin W. Mead who shall thereupon enter into the full employment of Philippine citizenship.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,