

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8831**



Introduced by HON. PHILIP CONRAD “DOK BONG” M. ACOP

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BINHI NG PAG-ASA PROGRAM
UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine agricultural sector has long been the backbone of the nation's economy, yet it faces a daunting generational crisis. With the average age of Filipino farmers hovering around 57 to 59 years old, the threat to long-term food security is no longer a distant concern—it is an immediate reality. The Binhi ng Pag-asa Act serves as a strategic legislative intervention designed to bridge this gap, institutionalizing a program that transforms agriculture from a toil of the past into a career of the future for the Filipino youth.

The bill recognizes that sustainable and inclusive growth is impossible without the active participation of the younger generation. By targeting individuals aged 15 to 30, the Act taps into a demographic that is naturally inclined toward innovation and digitalization.

The significance of this focus is two-fold. First, as to economic modernization, the bill seeks to identify the youth as the primary drivers of Smart Agriculture. By integrating IoT (Internet of Things), drones, and data analytics into farming, the bill seeks to increase efficiency and decrease the physical drudgery that often discourages young people from entering the field.

Second, as regards agricultural empowerment, by prioritizing youth from marginalized and rural communities, the Act addresses rural-to-urban migration, providing young Filipinos with viable, high-value reasons to stay in their provinces and develop their local economies.

A pivotal contribution of the Binhi ng Pag-asa Act is its shift in terminology and mindset from “subsistence farming” to “Agripreneurship.” The bill does not merely aim to produce more laborers; it aims to create business owners.

The bill ensures that beneficiaries are not just given seeds and left on their own. Rather, it provides a holistic ecosystem consisting of capacity building, financial grants, and market linkages. By teaching business planning and value-adding activities (like food processing and marketing), the Act ensures that agricultural ventures are profitable and resilient against market fluctuations.

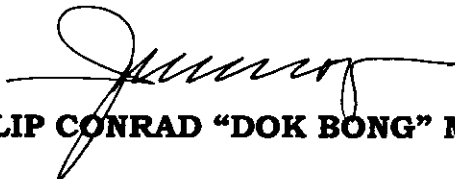
By institutionalizing the program under the Department of Agriculture, it becomes a permanent fixture rather than a temporary project. This way, the government ensures the fulfillment of the two following metrics:

1. *Consistency*: Future administrations cannot easily set aside the program, providing long-term security for young investors.
2. *Whole-of-Nation Approach*: The creation of the National Youth Agricultural Innovation Council (NYAIC) emphasizes inter-agency cooperation. By bringing together the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, National Youth Commission, and the Sangguniang Kabataan, and other relevant agencies, the bill ensures that agricultural education is integrated from the classroom to the local community level.

When the youth are empowered to lead in the agriculture sector, the entire nation reaps the rewards. These rewards include food security, poverty alleviations, and leadership development.

The Binhi ng Pag-asa Act is a piece of legislation that treats the youth not as passive recipients of aid, but as active partners in nation-building. By providing the tools, technology, and capital necessary to succeed in a modern world, the bill ensures that the “Seeds of Hope” planted today will grow into a robust, food-secure, and technologically advanced Philippine agricultural landscape tomorrow. It is an investment in the most fertile resource the country possesses: its people.

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


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AN ACT

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

SECTION 1. *Title* – This Act shall be known as the “*Binhi ng Pag-asa Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in the agriculture and fisheries sectors by engaging the youth in agripreneurship, farming and fishing innovation, leadership development, and community empowerment. The State shall invest in the next generation of Filipino farmers and fishers to secure long-term food security, rural development, and agricultural modernization.

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

- a) *Agripreneurship* - Entrepreneurial ventures related to agriculture and fisheries, including but not limited to crop production, livestock raising, aquaculture, food processing, marketing, and value-adding activities.
- b) *Youth Agripreneurs / Young Farmers and Fishers* - Individuals aged fifteen (15) to thirty (30) engaged in, or showing commitment to, sustainable agricultural or fisheries-based livelihoods.
- c) *Youth-Led Agricultural or Fisheries Enterprise* - An enterprise owned and operated by youth that applies sustainable and modern practices.
- d) *Smart Agriculture and Fisheries Technologies* - Tools, systems, and innovations, such as precision farming, IoT applications, aquaculture

sensors, drones, and data analytics that enhance efficiency and sustainability.

- e) *Market Linkages* - Connections facilitating youth agripreneurs' access to buyers, suppliers, distributors, and support networks to scale their operations.

SECTION 4. Institutionalization of the *Binhi ng Pag-asa Program* – The *Binhi ng Pag-asa Program*, hereinafter referred to as the Program, is hereby institutionalized as a permanent youth development and capacity-building initiative of the Department of Agriculture. The Program shall serve as a flagship mechanism for engaging and capacitating young individuals in agriculture and fisheries, and shall be implemented in all regions of the country.

SECTION 5. Objectives – The Program shall pursue the following objectives:

- a) To provide comprehensive training and education on leadership, agripreneurship, sustainable agriculture, and emerging agricultural technologies for the youth;
- b) To distribute appropriate starter kits, inputs, tools, or capital assistance to selected youth beneficiaries to initiate their own agricultural or fisheries-based livelihood projects;
- c) To assist youth beneficiaries in formulating viable project proposals and link them to potential funding opportunities or market access;
- d) To promote the inclusion of agriculture and fisheries in youth development programs at the national and local levels; and
- e) To establish a strong network of young agri-leaders and agripreneurs for peer learning, mentoring, and innovation-sharing.

SECTION 6. National Youth Agricultural Innovation Council (NYAIC) - A National Youth Agricultural Innovation Council (NYAIC) shall be created under the DA to provide policy direction and oversight for the Program. The Council shall be composed of representatives from:

- a) Department of Agriculture (DA)
- b) Department of Education (DepEd)
- c) Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- d) Agricultural Training Institute (ATI)
- e) National Youth Commission (NYC)
- f) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- g) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
- h) Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)

- i) Other relevant government and youth organizations as may be determined under the IRR.

SECTION 7. National Secretariat – A Binhi ng Pag-asa National Secretariat shall be established within the Department of Agriculture. The Secretariat shall perform program coordination, maintain a national registry of beneficiaries and youth organizations, consolidate data and impact reports, and provide technical and administrative support for nationwide roll-out.

SECTION 8. Local Government Support – Local government units are encouraged to support the implementation of the Program in their jurisdictions by identifying potential youth beneficiaries, providing local counterpart funding or facilities, and integrating the Program into local agricultural and youth development plans. Municipal and provincial agriculture offices shall serve as focal units for coordination and beneficiary support.

SECTION 9. Program Components – The Program shall have the following core components:

- a) *Capacity Building-Education and skills development in sustainable farming, fishing, business planning, and modern technologies.*
- b) *Financial Assistance and Grants* - Structured funding for startup, expansion, or modernization of youth-led enterprises.
- c) *Market Linkages and Expansion Support* - Assistance in connecting with markets, cooperatives, and business partners.
- d) *Technology Modernization* - Promotion and integration of smart agricultural and fisheries technologies.

Detailed procedures for each component shall be provided in the IRR.

SECTION 10. Qualified Beneficiaries – The Program shall prioritize Filipino youth aged fifteen (15) to thirty (30) who:

- a) Come from marginalized communities, rural areas, or low-income households;
- b) Demonstrate commitment to agripreneurship and leadership in agriculture or fisheries; and
- c) Show potential to contribute to sustainable sector development.

SECTION 11. Funding and Appropriations – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as

may be necessary for the continuous implementation of the Program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 12. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting – The Department of Agriculture shall monitor the implementation of the Program and submit an annual report to Congress, containing data on the number of beneficiaries, regional activities conducted, project outcomes, and policy recommendations. An independent evaluation of the Program shall be conducted every three (3) years to assess its effectiveness and recommend enhancements.

SECTION 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with concerned agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 14. Separability Clause – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

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

Approved,