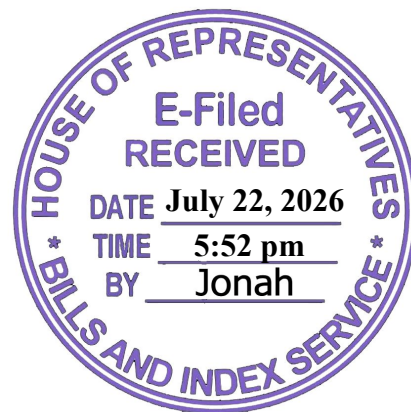




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10201**



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
RECOGNIZING, PRESERVING, AND PROMOTING PHILIPPINE
INDIGENOUS FARMING PRACTICES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is home to diverse Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) whose traditional farming systems and agricultural knowledge have long contributed to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, food security, and cultural preservation. However, many indigenous farming practices and knowledge systems are increasingly threatened by modernization, environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and unauthorized commercial exploitation.

Despite the importance of indigenous agricultural knowledge, there remains a need for stronger institutional mechanisms to protect traditional farming practices, preserve indigenous seed systems and biocultural heritage, and ensure that ICCs/IPs retain ownership and equitable benefits from the use of their knowledge and resources.

This bill seeks to protect, preserve, and promote indigenous farming practices and traditional agricultural knowledge systems through documentation with Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), protection against misappropriation and biopiracy, support for indigenous farming communities,

and the integration of sustainable indigenous practices into agricultural, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation programs.

The measure likewise recognizes the collective rights of ICCs/IPs over their traditional knowledge and establishes safeguards against unauthorized commercial or scientific use.

By strengthening support for indigenous farming systems and cultural heritage, this measure aims to promote environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, and inclusive rural development.

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



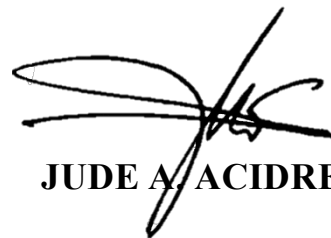
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Philippine Indigenous Farming Practices Protection Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Consistent with the provisions of the 1987 Constitution and Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize, respect, protect, preserve, and promote the indigenous farming practices, traditional agricultural knowledge systems, cultural expressions, and biocultural heritage of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs).

The State recognizes indigenous farming systems as vital contributors to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, sustainable land management, agroecology, food security, cultural identity, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Toward this end, the State shall safeguard indigenous agricultural knowledge and practices from unauthorized appropriation, exploitation, misuse, and cultural erosion, while supporting the sustainable development and economic empowerment of traditional farming communities.

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

- a) Identify, document, preserve, and protect indigenous and traditional farming knowledge, agricultural techniques, and cultural expressions related to farming and natural resource management;
- b) Promote intergenerational transmission of indigenous agricultural knowledge systems to younger generations;
- c) Protect ICCs/IPs from unauthorized commercial exploitation, biopiracy, misappropriation, or misuse of indigenous farming knowledge and genetic resources;
- d) Ensure equitable benefit-sharing arising from the use of indigenous agricultural knowledge, products, or biological resources;
- e) Integrate sustainable indigenous farming practices into agricultural development, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and food security programs where appropriate;
- f) Strengthen community-based conservation of indigenous seeds, heirloom crops, and traditional farming landscapes; and
- g) Support sustainable livelihood opportunities linked to indigenous agricultural heritage and ecological stewardship.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined:

- a) “Indigenous Farming Practices” refer to traditional agricultural systems, cultivation methods, land-use practices, seed management systems, ecological knowledge, and cultural agricultural practices developed, preserved, and transmitted by ICCs/IPs through generations;
- b) “Traditional Agricultural Knowledge Systems” refer to collective knowledge, innovations, technologies, practices, and cultural traditions relating to agriculture, biodiversity, natural resource management, and food systems maintained by ICCs/IPs;
- c) “Biocultural Heritage” refers to the interconnected relationship between indigenous communities, their cultural traditions, ancestral lands, biodiversity, farming systems, and ecological knowledge;
- d) “Benefit-Sharing” refers to the equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the use, research, commercialization, or application of indigenous agricultural knowledge or genetic resources;
- e) “Indigenous Seeds” or “Heirloom Varieties” refer to traditional, locally adapted, and culturally significant crop varieties preserved and cultivated by indigenous and traditional farming communities;
- f) “Agroecology” refers to sustainable farming approaches that integrate ecological principles, biodiversity conservation, and traditional knowledge systems into agricultural production;
- g) “Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)” refers to the consensus of ICCs/IPs obtained in accordance with their customary laws and practices, free from manipulation, coercion, and undue influence, after full disclosure of the intent and scope of any activity affecting them;

- h) “Community Knowledge Registry” refers to a protected inventory or documentation system containing indigenous agricultural knowledge and practices subject to community-defined access and disclosure protocols.

SEC. 5. *Recognition and Documentation of Indigenous Farming Practices.* –

(a) The Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), accredited indigenous peoples’ organizations, and relevant stakeholders, shall conduct a systematic identification, documentation, and inventory of indigenous and traditional agricultural practices, including but not limited to:

1. Traditional rice terracing and indigenous irrigation systems;
2. Indigenous pest management and organic farming practices;
3. Indigenous seed conservation and heirloom crop varieties;
4. Agroforestry, shifting cultivation, and multi-cropping systems rooted in cultural traditions;
5. Traditional soil and water conservation techniques;
6. Indigenous food systems and agricultural biodiversity practices; and
7. Other traditional ecological and agricultural knowledge systems.

(b) All documentation activities shall strictly comply with FPIC requirements and customary laws of the concerned ICCs/IPs.

(c) Documentation under this Act shall not diminish, transfer, waive, or extinguish the collective ownership rights of ICCs/IPs over their traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, biological resources, or farming systems.

(d) Sacred, culturally sensitive, confidential, or community-restricted knowledge shall not be disclosed, published, digitized, or publicly accessed without the express consent of the concerned ICCs/IPs.

SEC. 6. *Community Knowledge Registry and Protection Mechanisms.* – The DA, in coordination with the NCIP and NCCA, shall establish a protected Community Knowledge Registry for indigenous farming practices and agricultural heritage systems.

The Registry shall:

- a) Recognize community ownership and control over documented knowledge;
- b) Establish varying levels of confidentiality and restricted access consistent with customary laws and community protocols;
- c) Prevent unauthorized commercial appropriation or public disclosure of protected knowledge;
- d) Serve as reference for conservation, educational, and cultural preservation purposes; and
- e) Support recognition of indigenous agricultural systems as important cultural and ecological heritage sites.

SEC. 7. *Protection Against Misappropriation, Biopiracy, and Unauthorized Use.* – (a) Indigenous farming knowledge, traditional agricultural systems, indigenous seeds, and related biological resources shall be protected from unauthorized exploitation, commercial use, patenting, or scientific appropriation.

(b) Any research, publication, commercial activity, product development, or scientific use involving indigenous agricultural knowledge, genetic resources, or cultural expressions shall require:

1. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the concerned ICCs/IPs;
2. Equitable benefit-sharing agreements; and
3. Compliance with applicable laws, including the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 and environmental and intellectual property laws.

(c) The State shall recognize that indigenous communities retain collective ownership and control over their traditional agricultural knowledge and practices.

SEC. 8. *Indigenous Seed Sovereignty and Biodiversity Conservation.* – The State shall protect indigenous seed systems, heirloom crop varieties, and traditional seed exchange practices of ICCs/IPs.

The DA and relevant agencies shall support:

- a) Community seed banks and indigenous seed conservation initiatives;
- b) Protection and propagation of heirloom and climate-resilient crop varieties;
- c) Conservation of traditional farming landscapes and agro-biodiversity areas; and
- d) Community-led biodiversity conservation programs.

SEC. 9. *Integration into Agricultural Extension, Education, and Research.* –

(a) The DA, SUCs, and relevant educational institutions, in collaboration with the NCIP and NCCA, shall develop culturally appropriate programs integrating indigenous agricultural knowledge into:

1. Agricultural extension services;
2. Community-based trainings;
3. Agroecology and climate resilience programs;
4. Educational curricula where appropriate; and
5. Sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation initiatives.

(b) Indigenous farming systems that have demonstrated sustainability, ecological resilience, and cultural significance shall be promoted alongside science-based and modern agricultural approaches.

(c) Research involving indigenous agricultural knowledge shall comply with ethical standards, FPIC requirements, and community benefit-sharing mechanisms.

SEC. 10. *Support for Traditional Farming Communities.* – The DA, in partnership with other relevant agencies and LGUs, shall develop support programs for indigenous and traditional farming communities, including:

- a) Technical assistance and capacity-building;
- b) Support for sustainable and climate-resilient farming systems;
- c) Marketing assistance and value-chain development for culturally significant agricultural products;
- d) Geographical indication (GI), heritage branding, and product certification initiatives;
- e) Sustainable livelihood and agricultural tourism programs;
- f) Infrastructure and post-harvest support; and
- g) Programs supporting youth engagement and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Priority shall be given to community-led and cooperative-based initiatives.

SEC. 11. *Indigenous Participation and Governance.* – ICCs/IPs shall be meaningfully represented and consulted in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs under this Act.

The DA, NCIP, and LGUs shall establish mechanisms to ensure direct participation of indigenous elders, knowledge holders, women, farmers, and community leaders in decision-making processes.

SEC. 12. *Annual Report to Congress.* – The DA, in coordination with the NCIP and NCCA, shall submit an annual report to Congress containing:

- a) Documented indigenous farming systems and conservation initiatives;
- b) Programs and assistance provided to ICCs/IPs;
- c) Benefit-sharing agreements and research activities conducted;
- d) Cases of unauthorized use or exploitation addressed under this Act;
- e) Biodiversity and cultural preservation outcomes; and
- f) Recommendations for policy and program improvements.

SEC. 13. *Penalties.* – Any person, corporation, institution, or entity found guilty of unauthorized commercial exploitation, misappropriation, disclosure, patenting, falsification, or misuse of indigenous farming knowledge, biological resources, or protected cultural agricultural practices shall, without prejudice to liabilities under other laws, be subject to:

- a) A fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱500,000.00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (₱5,000,000.00);
- b) Imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not more than twelve (12) years;

- c) Cancellation of permits, licenses, or research authorizations; and
- d) Payment of restitution or damages to affected ICCs/IPs.

SEC. 14. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture, NCIP, and NCCA. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Program may also receive grants, donations, and technical assistance from domestic and international partners, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, in consultation with the NCIP, NCCA, DENR, LGUs, indigenous peoples' councils, farmer organizations, SUCs, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 18. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,