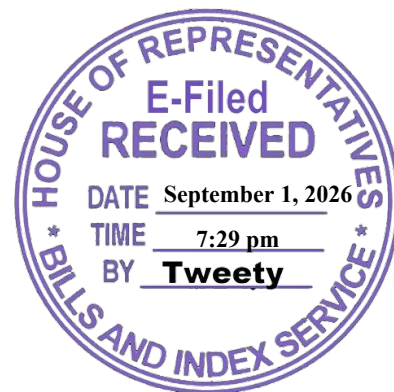




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11060

Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture is not merely an economic sector. It is the foundation of the country's food security, rural economy, employment, and national resilience. Yet, despite decades of government programs, subsidies, reforms, and investments, the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector continues to face a deep and persistent structural crisis.

The available government data are difficult to ignore.

In 2023, 27.0 percent of Filipino farmers and 27.4 percent of fisherfolk were living below the official poverty threshold, making farmers and fisherfolk among the basic sectors with the highest poverty incidences in the country. While these figures represent an improvement from 2021, when poverty incidence reached 30.0 percent among farmers and 30.6 percent among fisherfolk, the fact remains that more than one in every four farmers and fisherfolk remained poor.

This is particularly alarming because agriculture continues to provide livelihoods to a substantial portion of the Filipino workforce. In December 2025, **20.7 percent of all employed Filipinos were working in agriculture**, making it the second-largest broad sector of employment after services. Agriculture and forestry alone accounted for 18.8 percent of total employment.

Despite employing approximately one-fifth of the country's workers, however, agriculture, forestry, and fishing accounted for only **7.9 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2025**. The sector grew by 3.1 percent in 2025 after contracting by 1.5 percent in 2024, but its share of the national economy remained smaller than the 8.0 percent recorded in the previous year.

The disparity between agriculture's role in employment and its contribution to national economic output illustrates a fundamental productivity and income problem. Millions of Filipinos depend on agriculture for their livelihood, yet the sector continues to generate comparatively low economic value per worker.

The country's food production situation likewise demonstrates the vulnerability of the agricultural sector. In the fourth quarter of 2025, Philippine palay production fell to 6.85 million

metric tons, a 5.2 percent decline from the same quarter of 2024. More significantly, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that this was the lowest fourth-quarter palay production recorded since 2012. The area harvested to palay likewise declined by 4.3 percent during the period.

The decline in farm production is accompanied by serious income pressures on producers. From April to June 2025, the seasonally adjusted farmgate price of palay fell **by** 10.8 percent, from ₱19.45 per kilogram in the first quarter to ₱17.35 per kilogram in the second quarter. By the third quarter, the seasonally adjusted farmgate price had fallen further to ₱16.29 per kilogram, representing another 6.5 percent decline from the preceding quarter.

Thus, even when production improves on an annual basis, farmers can remain vulnerable when farmgate prices decline and production costs remain high. Increased output does not automatically translate into improved farmer incomes.

The country's dependence on agricultural imports further demonstrates the structural weakness of domestic production. In 2025, the Philippines recorded US\$29.63 billion in total agricultural trade, the highest level recorded since the PSA's agricultural trade series began in 1991. However, the country registered an agricultural trade deficit of US\$11.12 billion. In other words, the value of agricultural products imported into the Philippines substantially exceeded the value of agricultural products exported by the country.

This persistent agricultural trade deficit is particularly concerning for a country whose agricultural sector employs roughly one-fifth of its workforce and whose food security depends on reliable domestic production.

The problem is not limited to rice. In the fourth quarter of 2025, the country's overall crop production volume declined **by** 1.6 percent year-on-year, with palay accounting for a significant part of the decline. Meanwhile, the value of agriculture and fisheries production for the full year of 2025 amounted to **approximately** ₱1.77 trillion, representing only a 2.6 percent year-on-year increase. Crop production declined by 2.5 percent in the fourth quarter, while palay production value declined by 5.2 percent during the same period. These figures reveal a troubling pattern: the country continues to have a large population dependent on agriculture, but the sector struggles to generate sufficient productivity, income, and economic value for the people who work in it.

The crisis is therefore not simply a problem of insufficient production. It is a crisis of productivity, farmer income, competitiveness, market structure, infrastructure, technology adoption, financing, climate resilience, post-harvest systems, and institutional coordination. The persistence of these problems despite the existence of numerous government agencies and programs suggests that the Philippines needs more than another isolated intervention. What is required is a comprehensive assessment of the country's entire agricultural and fisheries system—from production and land use to financing, irrigation, mechanization, research and development, post-harvest facilities, logistics, processing, marketing, trade, and consumer access.

There is likewise a need to determine whether government resources are being directed toward programs that produce measurable and sustainable results. The country cannot afford fragmented interventions in which different agencies pursue overlapping objectives without a unified, evidence-based national strategy.

It is against this backdrop that this measure proposes the **creation of the Congressional Commission on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security (AGRICOM)**.

AGRICOM shall provide Congress with a dedicated, independent, evidence-based, and time-bound mechanism to examine the condition of Philippine agriculture and fisheries and determine the structural reforms necessary to reverse the sector's decline and unlock its potential. The Commission shall examine existing laws, policies, institutions, programs, expenditures, and government interventions. It shall identify duplication and gaps in government services, evaluate the effectiveness of public investments, review the country's agricultural value chains, and assess the actual experiences of farmers, fisherfolk, agricultural workers, cooperatives, agribusinesses, consumers, local governments, academe, and other stakeholders.

More importantly, AGRICOM shall not merely produce another assessment or study. It shall develop a concrete Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security Reform Agenda containing specific legislative measures, institutional reforms, budgetary priorities, measurable targets, responsible agencies, and implementation timelines. The Philippine agricultural crisis did not develop overnight, and it cannot be solved through a single subsidy, program, or policy. It requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response founded on reliable data, long-term planning, accountability, and institutional reform.

The Filipino farmer should not remain poor despite producing the food upon which the nation depends. The Filipino fisherfolk should not remain among the country's poorest sectors despite contributing to the country's food supply and coastal economy. And food security should not depend excessively on the country's ability to import what it cannot efficiently produce domestically.

The Philippines must move from a system of fragmented agricultural interventions toward a coherent national strategy that makes farming and fisheries productive, profitable, competitive, climate-resilient, technology-driven, and attractive to the next generation.

AGRICOM is therefore envisioned not as another layer of bureaucracy, but as a mechanism for Congress to confront the agricultural crisis directly, identify its root causes, and translate evidence into concrete reforms.

The urgency of this measure is underscored by the facts: farmers and fisherfolk continue to experience poverty at rates substantially higher than the national population; approximately one-fifth of Filipino workers remain dependent on agriculture; the sector contributes less than one-tenth of national GDP; agricultural trade remains deeply in deficit; and major agricultural commodities continue to experience production and farmgate price volatility.

These are not isolated statistics. Taken together, they demonstrate a structural problem that demands a structural response.

The creation of AGRICOM will provide Congress with the institutional mechanism to undertake that response and lay the foundation for a more productive, prosperous, resilient, and food-secure Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector.

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



CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
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Lone District, Calamba City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 11060

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

AN ACT
CREATING A CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, AND
FOOD SECURITY TO REVIEW, ASSESS, AND EVALUATE THE STATE OF
PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, RECOMMEND TARGETED POLICY
AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the “Congressional Commission on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security (AGRICOM) Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that shall ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.

The State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform and recognize agriculture and fisheries as fundamental components of national development, food security, employment generation, rural prosperity, and economic resilience.

Towards this end, the State shall ensure that the agriculture and fisheries sectors become productive, competitive, sustainable, climate-resilient, technologically advanced, and capable of providing decent and stable incomes to farmers, fisherfolk, agricultural workers, and other stakeholders throughout the food system.

The State shall likewise pursue a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in addressing structural, institutional, financial, technological, environmental, and market-related challenges confronting agriculture and fisheries.

SEC. 3. Objectives of AGRICOM. The Commission shall critically review, assess, and evaluate agriculture and fisheries policies, strategies, programs, institutions, and expenditures to attain the following objectives:

a. Re-examine national government goals and objectives with respect to agriculture and fisheries and determine whether existing policies remain responsive to current and emerging challenges;

b. Review and recommend modifications to agriculture and fisheries policies and public expenditures to integrate modern technologies, digitalization, innovation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster resilience, with the ultimate goal of raising productivity and global competitiveness;

c. Refocus and prioritize government support programs to ensure food security, adequate and affordable food supply, and improved access to nutritious food for all Filipino communities;

d. Assess and recommend reforms in agriculture and fisheries-related bureaucracies to address institutional weaknesses, overlapping mandates, fragmented programs, and coordination gaps among national government agencies, local government units, state universities and colleges, research institutions, and private sector stakeholders;

e. Review the entire agriculture and fisheries value chain, including production, post-harvest handling, processing, storage, logistics, financing, marketing, distribution, importation, and exportation;

f. Identify structural barriers that prevent farmers and fisherfolk from obtaining fair and sustainable incomes;

g. Strengthen the participation of farmers, fisherfolk, cooperatives, indigenous communities, agricultural workers, agribusiness enterprises, consumers, academe, civil society, and other stakeholders in policy development;

h. Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of agricultural credit, insurance, infrastructure, irrigation, mechanization, extension, research and development, market access, and other support services;

i. Recommend measures to improve productivity, competitiveness, rural employment, agribusiness development, and value addition; and

j. Develop a comprehensive and evidence-based reform agenda for the transformation of Philippine agriculture and fisheries.

SEC. 4. Creation of AGRICOM. There is hereby created a Congressional Commission on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security, hereinafter referred to as the “AGRICOM” or the “Commission.”

The Commission shall undertake a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance, condition, and prospects of the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector and the country's agri-food system for the purpose of recommending transformative, concrete, measurable, and targeted reforms, with the end in view of ensuring food security, improving the welfare of farmers and fisherfolk, and strengthening the country's agricultural competitiveness and resilience.

The AGRICOM shall be an independent, temporary, multisectoral, and evidence-based congressional body created for the purposes specified in this Act.

SEC. 5. Composition of AGRICOM. The Commission shall be composed of twelve (12) members, with six (6) members from the Senate and six (6) members from the House of Representatives: Provided, That one (1) member from each Chamber shall represent the Minority, as designated by the respective Minority Leader.

The following shall be members of the Commission:

On the part of the Senate:

a. The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform;

b. The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs;

c. The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and

d. Three (3) other members designated by the Senate President, one (1) of whom shall be designated upon recommendation of the Senate Minority Leader.

On the part of the House of Representatives:

a. The Chairperson of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food;

b. The Chairperson of the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources;

c. The Chairperson of the House Committee on Agrarian Reform;

d. The Chairperson of the House Committee on Climate Change; and

e. Two (2) other Members designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one (1) of whom shall be designated upon recommendation of the House Minority Leader.

The Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform and the House Committee on Agriculture and Food shall serve as the Co-Chairpersons of the Commission.

The members of the Commission shall receive no additional compensation by reason of their membership therein. However, they shall be entitled to travelling, communication, and other necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official functions, subject to existing laws, rules, regulations, and auditing procedures.

SEC. 6. Executive Director. The Commission shall appoint an Executive Director (ED) who shall be a recognized expert with substantial experience in agriculture, fisheries, public policy, economics, development planning, or related fields.

The Executive Director shall serve on a full-time basis and shall have the rank, privileges, and emoluments of an Executive Director IV, Salary Grade 29, subject to existing compensation and budgeting laws.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and operations of the Commission and shall perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Commission.

SEC. 7. Technical Secretariat. A Technical Secretariat, to be headed by the Executive Director, shall be organized to provide technical, research, administrative, and operational support to the Commission in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions.

The Executive Director shall organize the Secretariat and may engage qualified technical experts, researchers, consultants, temporary personnel, and other specialists as may be necessary, subject to existing civil service, budgeting, procurement, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

The Technical Secretariat shall co-exist with the Commission for the duration of its mandate.

SEC. 8. Philippine Institute for Development Studies as Research Arm. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) shall serve as the principal research arm of the Commission.

PIDS shall undertake or assist in producing data-based studies, policy analysis, sectoral assessments, economic analysis, and other research necessary for the formulation of evidence-based recommendations of the Commission.

PIDS may coordinate with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Science and Technology, National Economic and Development Authority, state universities and colleges, research institutions, and other public and private institutions in the conduct of its research activities.

SEC. 9. Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation and Policy Advisory Council. There is hereby created an Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation and Policy Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Advisory Council, which shall provide the Commission with expert assistance, technical advice, and sectoral perspectives.

The Advisory Council shall be composed of recognized experts chosen by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives upon recommendation of the Commission, representing the following sectors:

- a. Three (3) members from state university and academic institutions, with one (1) representative each from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao;
- b. Two (2) members from the business and agribusiness sector;
- c. Two (2) members from government agriculture and fisheries agencies;
- d. Two (2) members who are incumbent or former heads of local government units with demonstrated experience in agriculture or fisheries development; and
- e. Two (2) members from civil society organizations, farmers' and fisherfolk's organizations, or development partners engaged in agriculture and fisheries.

The Advisory Council shall be consulted on major studies, policy recommendations, and reform proposals of the Commission.

SEC. 10. Duration of AGRICOM. The Commission shall accomplish its mandate within three (3) years from its organization. It shall organize itself and commence the performance of its mandate upon the effectivity of this Act.

The Commission may recommend to Congress an extension of its mandate when necessary to complete a specific study, reform agenda, or final report: Provided, That any extension shall require an Act of Congress.

SEC. 11. Powers and Functions of AGRICOM. The Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

a. Formulate short-term, medium-term, and long-term policy and program recommendations relating to agriculture and fisheries consisting of specific, targeted, measurable, and time-bound solutions, including:

1. Sectoral plans, targets, and performance indicators;
2. Physical and digital infrastructure;
3. Research, development, technology transfer, and innovation;
4. Training, extension, and human resource development;
5. Agricultural financing, credit, insurance, and risk management;
6. Market development and access;
7. Climate change adaptation and disaster resilience; and
8. Coordination among government agencies, local governments, farmers, fisherfolk, private sector, academe, and other stakeholders;

b. Approve the work plan, guidelines, research agenda, and overall framework for the national review, assessment, and evaluation;

c. Hold public hearings, consultations, technical meetings, roundtable discussions, and other proceedings necessary to obtain information and recommendations;

d. Receive testimonies, reports, studies, data, and expert advice concerning the condition of Philippine agriculture and fisheries;

e. Summon by subpoena any public official or private person to testify before the Commission and require by subpoena duces tecum the production of documents and records necessary for the performance of its functions, in accordance with applicable laws and rules;

f. Secure from any department, bureau, office, agency, government-owned or controlled corporation, local government unit, or other government instrumentality such technical information, reports, records, recommendations, plans, and other assistance as may be necessary;

g. Conduct nationwide and sector-specific consultations with farmers, fisherfolk, agricultural workers, cooperatives, indigenous communities, agribusiness enterprises, consumers, local governments, civil society, academe, and other stakeholders;

h. Review the mandates, organizational structures, programs, budgets, expenditures, and performance of government agencies involved in agriculture and fisheries;

i. Identify duplication, fragmentation, gaps, and conflicts in government programs and recommend institutional and bureaucratic reforms;

j. Commission or undertake studies on agriculture and fisheries, including studies on productivity, food security, climate change, land use, water resources, logistics, infrastructure, financing, market access, technology, labor, and agricultural value chains;

k. Review pending legislation before Congress relevant to agriculture, fisheries, agrarian reform, food security, rural development, and related matters;

l. Recommend the enactment, amendment, consolidation, or repeal of laws and the adoption of appropriate executive and administrative measures;

m. Develop a comprehensive and evidence-based Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security Reform Agenda containing specific reforms, measurable targets, timelines, responsible agencies, and proposed legislative and budgetary actions;

n. Submit periodic reports to Congress on its findings, accomplishments, and recommendations;

o. Submit a final report containing its findings, recommendations, proposed legislation, institutional reforms, and implementation program to the President and both Houses of Congress at the end of its mandate; and

p. Perform such other functions as may be necessary to accomplish the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 12. Standing Committees. The Commission shall establish such standing committees or technical working groups as may be necessary to effectively discharge its mandate.

The standing committees may focus on, among others:

a. Agricultural Productivity and Modernization;

b. Fisheries and Aquaculture Development;

c. Food Security and Supply Chains;

d. Agricultural Financing and Investments;

- e. Climate Change and Disaster Resilience;
- f. Agrarian Reform and Rural Development;
- g. Research, Technology, Innovation and Extension;
- h. Market Access, Trade and Competitiveness; and
- i. Institutional and Bureaucratic Reforms.

The Commission may engage experts and resource persons from the public and private sectors to assist in the work of the standing committees.

SEC. 13. Periodic and Final Reports. The Commission shall submit to the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a semi-annual report containing its accomplishments, findings, identified problems, and recommended actions.

The final report shall contain, among others:

- a. A comprehensive assessment of the state of Philippine agriculture and fisheries;
- b. An evaluation of existing policies, programs, institutions, and expenditures;
- c. Identified institutional, regulatory, financial, technological, environmental, and market barriers;
- d. Specific short-term and long-term policy recommendations;
- e. Proposed legislative measures;
- f. Proposed institutional and bureaucratic reforms;
- g. Recommended budgetary priorities and investments;
- h. Measurable targets and performance indicators; and
- i. A proposed implementation roadmap for the transformation of Philippine agriculture and fisheries.

SEC. 14. Cooperation of Government Agencies and Other Institutions. All departments, bureaus, offices, agencies, government-owned or controlled corporations, local government units, state universities and colleges, and other instrumentalities of government shall extend full cooperation and assistance to the Commission.

The Commission may enter into memoranda of agreement or other appropriate arrangements with public and private institutions for research, technical assistance, data gathering, consultations, and other activities necessary to accomplish its mandate.

SEC. 15. Congressional Oversight. Upon the expiration of the Commission's mandate, the Committees on Agriculture and Food of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall jointly monitor the implementation of the recommendations adopted by Congress arising from the final report of the AGRICOM.

For this purpose, the appropriate Congressional Committees may conduct hearings and require periodic reports from concerned government agencies regarding the implementation of legislative and policy reforms recommended by the Commission.

SEC. 16. Appropriations. The initial funding necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, procurement, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued operation of the Commission and its Technical Secretariat shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 17. Implementing Guidelines. The Commission shall promulgate the necessary rules, guidelines, and procedures for the effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from its organization.

SEC. 18. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 19. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,