



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



FAO-Legislative Advisory Group in the Philippines (FLAGPH)

Pagkain Para sa Lahat: A Public Forum on Food Security and Nutrition Legislative Agenda

The Philippines continues to face challenges in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, with 1.3 million families or 8.3 million Filipinos unable to meet their basic food needs in 2015, according to a report by the Philippine Statistics Authority. Moreover, despite the country's economic growth in recent years, poverty incidence remains high at an estimated 21.6 percent of the population. Farmers and fisherfolk consistently rank among the poorest. Incidence of malnutrition, especially in children 0-5 years old, remains prevalent in the most impoverished regions of the country, many of which are in Mindanao.

The FAO-Legislative Advisory Group in the Philippines (FLAGPH), an alliance of legislators in the Philippines working towards specific legislative and policy measures to ensure freedom from hunger, was launched in January 2018 to further strengthen the partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of the Philippines.

“FAO firmly believes that when public policies and programs are supported by stable and inclusive legislative process, the indicators of malnutrition and food insecurity correspondingly improve. FAO is privileged to be part of the FLAGPH parliamentary alliance, which we are confident will work for more legislative actions to ensure food security and nutrition.”

*Jose Luis Fernandez
FAO Representative in the Philippines*

Initially composed of 10 legislators from both Houses of Congress (Senate and House of Representatives), FLAGPH is an advisory group whose aim is to contribute to



Representatives of Congress, CPBRD, and SEPO discuss pending and approved food security and nutrition legislations.

addressing national food security and nutrition issues by taking the necessary legislative actions that would impact on the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and environment and natural resources sectors.

FLAGPH is a pilot initiative of FAO in the Philippines under a larger effort to build a Parliamentary Alliance in the Asia-Pacific region. FLAGPH's activities includes consultations with provincial and municipal governments, local legislative councils, farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous groups, and civil society organizations as part of its objective to advance food security and nutrition in the Philippine legislative agenda.

FLAGPH recently organized a forum entitled **“PAGKAIN PARA SA LAHAT: A Public Forum on Food Security and Nutrition Legislative Agenda”** to discuss some of the current related laws and bills with key stakeholders. The forum was held on 26 March 2019 at the Ilustrado Restaurant in Intramuros, Manila.



FAO Representative in the Philippines Jose Luis Fernandez welcomes the participants to the forum.

The forum aimed to contribute to raising the awareness of the public on existing and proposed legislations relevant to improving food security and nutrition in the country. It also helped initiate discussions with stakeholders on how the laws or bills will benefit the targeted sectors.

Among the legislators who participated in the forum were Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, Hon. Teodoro “Teddy” Baguilat Jr., and Hon. Rodante Marcoleta, who presented their respective legislative agenda. The Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department (CPBRD) and the Senate Economic Planning Office (SEPO) also discussed the status of food security and nutrition bills filed and passed during the 17th Congress.

Civil society organization members and people’s organization leaders representing farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, and the urban poor, and other development partners, also contributed to the discussions.

The event was co-organized by the FAO, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and Catholic Media Network (CMN).

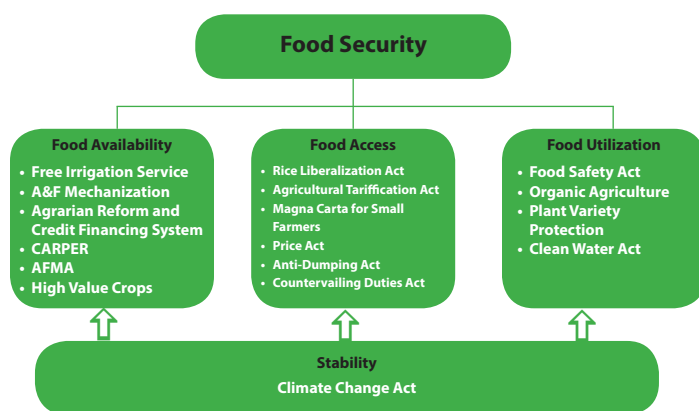


The panelists and some forum participants from CSOs, people’s organizations, and development partners pose for a group photo.



SENATE ECONOMIC PLANNING OFFICE (SEPO)

SEPO is a permanent office within the Senate that provides technical support to the Senate President and Members of the Senate in their task to enact relevant and timely legislation; and to review policies on social and economic development. It provides the Members of the Senate with proper research and in-depth policy analysis on economic and social issues and any such issue as may be assigned to it by Members of the Senate. It also provides data and statistics which would assist various committees in the discharge of all matters within their jurisdiction.



LAWS RELATED TO FOOD AVAILABILITY	
Law	Objective
RA 10969 of 2018 or Free Irrigation Service Act	Lowers the cost of production and relieves farmers from the burden and consequence of unpaid irrigation service fees.
RA 10601 of 2012 or an act promoting agricultural and fisheries mechanization development in the country	Develops and promotes agricultural machinery and other mechanization technology.
RA 1000 of 2010 or an act providing for an agriculture and agrarian reform credit and financing system through banking institutions	Mandates all banks to set aside at least 25 percent of the total loanable funds for agriculture and fisheries and agrarian reform beneficiaries.
RA 9700 of 2009 or Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms Law	Provides augmentation funds to accomplish final acquisition and distribution of undistributed lands.
RA 8435 or Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act	Defines measures to modernize the agriculture and fisheries for the country to compete in the global market.
RA 7900 of 1995 or High Value Crops Development Act	Promotes the production, processing, marketing and distribution of high value crops.

LAWS RELATED TO FOOD ACCESS

Law	Objective
RA 11203 or the Act Liberalizing the importation, exportation and trading of rice	Creation of a more competitive market, removes unnecessary government intervention on rice sector, and provides assistance to rice farmers.
RA 8178 of 1996 or Agriculture Tariffication Act	Replaces quantitative restrictions on agricultural products, except rice.
RA 7607 of 1992 or Magna Carta for Small Farmers	Empowers small farmers by enhancing their skills, & develop their capabilities.
RA 7581 of 1992 or Price Act	Protects consumers by stabilizing the price and supply of basic necessities and prime commodities by prescribing measures against undue price increase especially during emergency situations.
RA 8752 of 1999 or Anti-Dumping Act	Protection to domestic industry likely to be injured by dumping of imported articles.
RA 8751 of 1999 or Countervailing Duties Act	Protects domestic industries from unfair trade practice of employing subsidies on a country's export products.

LAWS RELATED TO FOOD UTILIZATION

Law	Objective
RA 10611 of 2013 Food Safety Act	Strengthens food safety regulation system to protect consumer health and facilitate market access of local foods.
RA 10068 of 2010 or an Act providing for the development and promotion of organic agriculture in the Philippines for other purpose	Promotes, disseminates, develops and implements organic agriculture.
RA 9168 of 2004 Philippine Plant Variety Protection Act	Institutionalizes intellectual property rights protection for plant varieties and creates the National Plan Variety Protection Board.
RA 9275 of 2004 Philippine Clean Water Act	Establishes to protect, preserve and revive water quality of the country's resources.

LAWS RELATED TO FOOD STABILITY

Law	Objective
RA 9729 of 2009 Climate Change Act	Creates Climate Change Commission--policy-making body for climate change.

PENDING BILLS IN THE SENATE RELATED TO FOOD SECURITY

The Right to Adequate Food Framework (SB 111; SB 712; SB 1928; SB 1707; SB 1624)

- Declares guaranteeing the right to adequate food as a policy of the State
- Creates an Inter-Agency Council, Commission, or Network on the Right to Food

National Food Security Act (SB 1028)

- Creates an Adequate Food Security Authority/Council
- Addresses the issues of hunger and poverty by institutionalizing the National Feeding Program, streamlining the food requirement and food distributions systems

Affordable Food Transparency Act (SB 903)

- Adopts and implements a policy of public disclosure of all government transactions involving food and basic commodities.
- Requires the DA to publish all relevant information on the importation of basic commodities, including main records and database.

Strategic Food Security Rice Reserve Act (SB 53)

- Maintains a minimum rice reserve equivalent to the 15-day national rice consumption to be controlled by the NFA.

Zero Food Waste Act (SB 984; SB 357)

- Prohibits food related businesses such as grocery stores, fast food outlets, and restaurants from throwing away edible food and instead donate them to food banks or charities to be distributed to the food insecure.
- Provides tax incentives to these establishments.

Integrated Urban Agriculture Act (SB 983; SB 869; SB 141)

- Institutionalizes urban agriculture and vertical farming in highly urbanized cities nationwide to reduce urban poverty, ensure food security, and enhance urban environment management.

National Land Use Act (SB 1522; SB 1144; SB 1015; SB 34; SB 25)

- Integrates existing land use laws which are sector-specific, e.g. forestry, housing and urban development, agriculture and fisheries modernization.
- Institutionalizes land use planning as basis for the lands rational utilization, management, and development.

Land Consolidation and Utilization Act

- Consolidates small contiguous land holdings into bigger agricultural estates.

Revised Charter of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (SB 977)

- Strengthens the financial and organizational capacity of PCIC.
- Extends life and accident insurance coverage to farmers and fishermen.
- Offers free weather index-based crop insurance.

Free Index-Based Crop insurance Act

- Establishes a nationwide Free Weather Index-Based Crop Insurance (FIBCI) Program.
- Offers Weather Index-based insurance.
- Creates a FIBCI Premium Subsidy Fund.



CONGRESSIONAL POLICY AND BUDGET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

A think tank within the House of Representatives, which provides ideas, policy advice, technical assistance, and information support in the formulation and oversight of socio-economic legislation. Its specific functions include the analyses of the impact of legislation, conduct of in-depth studies on identified policy issues; provision of technical assistance to the Speaker and House panel for the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) and other interagency committees; and analyses of the Philippine Development Plan, the annual National Budget, and other government programs and policy pronouncements; among others.

STATUS OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION-RELATED BILLS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (17th Congress)

1. Waiver of Irrigation Service Fees (Free ISF Bill/RA 10969) – enacted on February 2, 2018
2. First 1,000 Days of Life Law (Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act/RA 11148) – enacted on November 29, 2018
3. Creating the Coconut Industry Trust Fund and Providing for its Management and Utilization (COCO Levy Utilization Bill; HB 5745) – vetoed by the President
4. Rice Tariffication Bill (Converting QRs into Tariff/RA 11203) – enacted on February 14, 2019
5. National Land Use Act (HB 5240) – pending in the Senate
6. Strengthening the Philippine Agricultural Insurance Program (HB 6923) – pending in the Senate
7. Prohibiting the Conversion of Irrigated and Irrigable Lands, Amending for the Purpose RA 6657 or the CARL of 1988, as Amended (HB 7115) – pending in the Senate
8. Mandating the Government to Provide Access to Information on Food and other Basic Commodities to Guarantee the Right of the People to Affordable Food and Adequate Food Supply (Right to Adequate Food Framework Act or the Zero Hunger Act; HB 7193) – pending in the Senate
9. Instituting the Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program of the Department of Agriculture (Substitute Bill HB 8857) – approved on Third Reading on January 28, 2019
10. The Urban Agriculture Act 2017 (HB 5190) – reported out February 11, 2019
11. Restructuring the National Food Authority (NFA Reform Bill/HB 5365 and 3394) – pending with the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization since October 10, 2018
12. Strengthening the National Extension System to Accelerate Agriculture and Fisheries Development (HB 4140) – pending with the Committee on Agriculture and Food since November 7, 2016
13. Food Security Framework Act (HB 4361) – pending with the Committee on Government Reorganization since November 21, 2016
14. Promoting Hydroponics Agriculture as an Instruments to Solve Problems of Food Security and as a Mechanism of Wise Use of Scarce Land Resources (HB 1481) – pending with the Committee on Agriculture and Food since August 1, 2016
15. National Soil Health Program Act of 2016 (HB 3349) – pending with the Committee on Agriculture and Food since August 31, 2016
16. Immediate Rice Security Act (HB 1965) – pending with the Committee on Government Enterprise and Privatization since October 10, 2018
17. Strategic Food Security Rice Reserve Act (HB 1715) – pending with the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization since October 10, 2016
18. National Agricultural Marketing Act (HB 1720) – pending with the Committee on Agriculture and Food since August 8, 2016
19. Aeroponics Technology in Agricultural Production Act of 2016 (HB 3977) – pending with the Committee on Agriculture and Food since October 12, 2016



“The Philippines ranked 9th in the world in stunting (2017 Save the Children Stolen Childhood Report). Stunted growth is caused by chronic malnutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, and around 3.6 million children suffer from it. Thus, it is necessary to give importance to the First 1,000 days Law (RA 11148).”

Hon. Bernadette Herrera-Dy
Bagong Henerasyon Party List
FLAGPH Interim Chairperson



“We have 14 million hectares of alienable and disposable lands and less than four million hectares of prime agricultural lands remain. We need to determine clearly which areas are able to feed millions of Filipinos in the next 50 years, while also identifying where infrastructure are more suitable and without destroying our watersheds further. This is the core of the proposed National Land Use Act (NLUA).”

Hon. Teodoro Baguilat Jr.
Lone District of Ifugao Province



“In the CPBRD, there are at least 17 House Bills on Food Security and Nutrition as of March 11, 2019... One of which is the BIDANI or Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement. One of the points that BIDANI advocates is that State universities and community colleges should be able to help the barangays in being able to address problems in nutrition for children.”

Hon. Rodante Marcoleta
SAGIP Party List



“FAO reaffirms the importance of engagement with parliamentarians to fight hunger. FLAGPH is one of the first initiatives for FAO to build a powerful alliance with lawmakers in Asia. We hope to continue building alliance with the Philippines lawmakers in the years to come.”

Kaori Abe
Partnership Officer, FAO Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific

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