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Senate
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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 736

Miriam Defensor Santiago

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE NECESSITY OF IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF
PSYCHOSOCIAL AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT FOR WOMEN SEVERELY AFFECTED
BY CALAMITIES AND DISASTERS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 14 provides: “The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men”;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9710 also known as the Magna Carta of Women, Section 10 states: “Women have the right to protection and security in times of disasters, calamities, and other crisis situations especially in all phases of relief, recovery, rehabilitation, and construction efforts. The State shall provide for immediate humanitarian assistance, allocation of resources, and early resettlement, if necessary. It shall also address the particular needs of women from a gender perspective to ensure their full protection from sexual exploitation and other sexual and gender- based violence committed against them. Responses to disaster situations shall include the provision of services, such as psychosocial support, livelihood support, education, psychological health, and comprehensive health services, including protection during pregnancy”;

WHEREAS, according to a 27 February 2012 article in Bulatlat.com, women are vulnerable to reproductive and sexual health problems, and increased rates of sexual and domestic violence in addition to the general effects of natural disasters and lack of health care;

WHEREAS, this is based on a report by the Center for Women’s Research (CWR) on the impact of the recent calamities that hit Northern Mindanao on women and children;

WHEREAS, the CWR report cited data from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) that tropical storm Sendong (internationally known as Washi) left a trail of destruction leaving 1,268 dead, majority of whom were women and children; more than 6,071 were injured and 125, 256 families were affected;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the NDRRMC estimated the damage in infrastructure and agriculture to have reached more than P1.7 billion;

WHEREAS, according to NDRRMC, not a single typhoon has entered the country yet for this year, but many areas particularly in Visayas and Mindanao have already experienced floods and landslide which affected thousands of families who were brought to evacuation centers;

WHEREAS, the CWR asserted that calamities take the greatest toll on children and women, especially on pregnant, old-aged and women with disabilities; there is also high vulnerability of sexual abuse and harassment especially in evacuation centers;

WHEREAS, in the CWR study, the group discovered that women are forced to take extra jobs and find alternative sources of living since the regular sources of income of husbands are disrupted;

WHEREAS, the CWR further alleged that in the immediate wake of calamities, the number of women contracting diseases such as urinary tract infection, diarrhea and lung complications rise;

WHEREAS, to aggravate the dire situation, women also become more vulnerable to sexual abuse in evacuation centers; due to food shortage, there are cases of “isang gabi, isang salop” (sexual favors in exchange for a ganta of rice) and there have also been cases of physical abuse by husbands who get drunk in order to escape the reality of suffering in the evacuation centers;

WHEREAS, based on the 2003 United Nations (UN) Handbook for Estimating the Socioeconomic and Environmental Effects of Disaster, one consequence of disaster is the decapitalization of women and the reduction of their share of productive activities in the formal and informal sectors;

WHEREAS, according to the UN, women are disadvantaged in two ways since they sustain direct damages or production losses (housing and means of production) and they also lose income when they have to apply themselves temporarily to unpaid emergency tasks and an increased amount of unpaid reproductive work;


WHEREAS, research by the World Health Organization revealed that in addition to the general effects of natural disasters and lack of health care, women are vulnerable to reproductive and sexual health problems, and increased rates of sexual and domestic violence

WHEREAS, women’s vulnerability is further increased by the loss of men and/or livelihoods, especially when a male head of household has died and the women must provide for their families; post disaster stress symptoms are often but not universally reported more frequently by women than men;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the State to be proactive in the protection of women’s rights and welfare as well as the alleviation of their dire predicament;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the necessity of immediate provision of psychosocial and livelihood support for women severely affected by calamities and disasters.

Adopted,

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MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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