

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 OCT 20 A8:10

SENATE

S. No. 1403

RECEIVED BY: _____

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Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE
PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE YOUNG FARMERS AND
FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture is an important industry in our country but through the years, it has been beset with various challenges. Article II, Section 21 of the 1987 Constitution emphasizes that "the State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform."

According to the 2022 Selected Statistics on Agriculture published by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), "the agriculture sector employed 10.66 million persons and it represented a share of 24.2 percent to the national employment". However, today, the average age of Filipino farmers is fifty-seven (57) years, posing a serious concern to national food security by 2030. Also, according to the August 2022 Labor Force Survey, around 6.81 million employed youth out of the 7.64 million population of youth 15-24 years old, are in the labor force.

The failure to generate opportunities for the youth is both a development obstacle and threat to social justice and national security. By ensuring youth participation in agriculture, this bill aims to address poverty and inequality, and the lack of social mobility. Until today, young farmers are challenged by the lack of access to training and education; the lack of available land to till or affordable credit; a lack of "green jobs"; and absence of consultation venues for the youth in agricultural policy formulation.

This bill aims to revitalize the participation of the youth in rural and agricultural development by enacting a strengthened "Young Farmers Challenge Program" anchored on the whole-of-nation approach.

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


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR. 

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**AN ACT
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

- 1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Young Farmers and*
2 *Fisherfolk Challenge Act of 2022*".
- 3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 recognize and engage the role of the youth in nation building and rural development,
5 providing for this purpose access to knowledge, information and education, access to
6 land, new sources of financial services and capital, green jobs, access to new and
7 niche markets, and participation in policy dialogue.
- 8 Sec. 3. *Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.* - There is hereby
9 established a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program, hereinafter referred
10 to as the *Program*, that shall support and empower the young farmers and fisherfolk
11 to be active partners in food security and agricultural development and modernization.
12 The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue a career or engage in activities
13 related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk participation in policy
14 formulation and program implementation relative to the agriculture sector, and
15 provide institutional support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of
16 the youth to fully realize their role as agents and partners for development.

1 Sec. 4. *Beneficiaries of the Program.* - The Program is intended to support
2 young farmers and fisherfolk between eighteen (18) to thirty (30) years of age, who
3 are engaged in farming and fisheries activities, and are included in the Registry System
4 for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA). The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall
5 update its existing database to reflect these indicators.

6 Sec. 5. *Creation of Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council.* - There is
7 hereby created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council, hereinafter
8 referred to as the "Council", to properly oversee the implementation of the Program.
9 The Council shall be composed of the following:

- 10 A. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) or a duly authorized
11 representative who is at least an Undersecretary, who shall be the Chair;
- 12 B. Representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), who shall
13 likewise be an Undersecretary;
- 14 C. Representative of the Department of Education (DepEd), who shall likewise be
15 an Undersecretary;
- 16 D. Representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 17 E. Representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- 18 F. Representative of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
- 19 G. Representative of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
20 (TESDA);
- 21 H. Representative of the Department of the Interior and Local Government
22 (DILG);
- 23 I. Representative of the Department of Information and Communications
24 Technology (DICT);
- 25 J. Representative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
26 (DENR);
- 27 K. Representative of the National Youth Commission (NYC);
- 28 L. Representative of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP);
- 29 M. Representative of a national organization of young farmers' cooperative or
30 association, *Provided*, That the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to
31 forty (40) years of age;

- 1 N. Representative of a national organization of fisherfolk cooperative or
2 association, *Provided*, That the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to
3 forty (40) years of age;
- 4 O. Representative of a farmers' women organization or cooperative, *Provided* That
5 the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age;
- 6 P. Representative of a national organization for agritourism;
- 7 Q. Representative of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs);
- 8 R. Representative of private educational institutions (PEIs); and
- 9 S. Representative of a national organization for food, restaurant, and business
10 sectors.

11 The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) shall serve as its
12 Secretariat.

13 *Sec. 6. Powers and Functions of the Council.* - The Council shall have the
14 following powers and functions:

- 15 A. Formulate the "Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program", hereinafter
16 referred to as the "*Program*," in consultation with research institutions such as
17 the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in
18 Agriculture (SEARCA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural
19 Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), University of the Philippines
20 - Los Banos (UPLB) and other relevant SUCs;
- 21 B. Develop, in coordination with various departments and agencies, specific action
22 plans for unambiguous tasking and quick implementation;
- 23 C. Create special programs for marginalized sectors such as youth from urban
24 poor, women, indigenous people, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of
25 Muslim Mindanao (BARMM);
- 26 D. Develop initiatives in new farm sectors such as "smart farming", farm tourism,
27 agro-, aqua-, and hydroponics, organic and boutique vegetables;
- 28 E. Identify relevant training and livelihood budgets in the different departments
29 and agencies, including start-up capital;
- 30 F. Implement the departments' and agencies' action plans, engaging the
31 assistance of the Local Government Units (LGUs) and Sangguniang Kabataan
32 (SK);

- 1 G. Identify the best practices in the implementation of the program, as well as
2 emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming and farm tourism,
3 in compliance with Republic Act (RA) No. 10816, or the "*Farm Tourism*
4 *Development Act of 2016*";
- 5 H. Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting agricultural
6 enterprises of qualified young farmers and fisherfolk entrepreneurs, pursuant
7 to RA 11337, otherwise known as the "*Innovative Start-up Act of 2018*";
- 8 I. Initiate new packaging, promotion, and marketing events;
- 9 J. Ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and
10 fisherfolk;
- 11 K. Package incentive and recognition programs/awards system for the youth;
- 12 L. Participate in agri- and food tourism marketing events, nationally and
13 internationally;
- 14 M. Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in areas
15 such as "green jobs", reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other
16 rural-based jobs, through the DOLE'S Special Program for Employment of
17 Students (SPES) and other livelihood and training programs;
- 18 N. Establish linkages with agricultural representatives of the Association of
19 Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other international farming youth
20 associations;
- 21 O. Engage national and international leaders in formulating policies directly
22 addressing young farmers and fisherfolk concerns; and
- 23 P. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of this Act as well
24 as its impact on the participants and beneficiaries.

25 Sec. 7. *Access to Knowledge, Information, and Education.* - A whole
26 government approach shall be utilized to inform and enlist young farmers and
27 fisherfolk in agriculture:

- 28 A. Role of the DepEd - The DepEd shall include at all levels, but particularly in its
29 K-12 program, elective subjects focused on agriculture, such as garden
30 farming, urban greening, reforestation and coastal management;
- 31 B. Role of the TESDA - The TESDA, in coordination with the DICT and the DOST,
32 shall add subjects in their training centers for agricultural entrepreneurship,

1 "smart farming", and other advanced farming technologies, prioritizing
2 programs focused on agriculture. The TESDA shall also provide scholarships
3 and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk;

4 C. Role of the DOLE - The DOLE shall provide on-the-job training (OJT) programs
5 for young farmers and fisherfolk, including the Special Program for Employment
6 of Students (SPES);

7 D. Role of the CHED, SUCs, and Agricultural Schools - The CHED, SUCs, and
8 agricultural schools shall provide scholarship grants, stipends, and subsidies to
9 qualified young farmers and fisherfolk. Likewise, the CHED, SUCs, and
10 agricultural schools shall provide schemes for distance, remote, and digital
11 learning. The CHED shall likewise encourage the private colleges and
12 universities to provide similar opportunities and schemes to qualified recipients.
13 The CHED shall include agriculture in its National Service Training Program
14 (NSTP) curriculum, such as garden farming, urban greening, and coastal
15 management. CHED shall likewise promulgate the policies, standards and
16 guidelines for agriculture courses, which shall focus on sustainability and the
17 achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Scholarships for
18 post-graduate and doctoral degrees shall be provided by CHED: *Provided*, That
19 private universities and colleges are also enjoined to provide the same.

20 E. Role of the DA, ATI and PCAF - The DA, through the 4-H Club of the ATI and
21 the Agricultural and Fishery Youthpreneur Council (AFYC) of the PCAF, shall
22 provide for scholarship grants and stipends to qualified young farmers and
23 fisherfolk, targeting specific marginalized sectors such as women, indigenous
24 people, and persons with disabilities (PWDs);

25 F. Role of the DOST and DICT - The DOST and DICT shall develop portals, utilize
26 social media, and exploit other electronic technologies, to publicize the
27 Program;

28 G. Role of the LGU and the SK - The LGU shall inform and enlist the SK who shall
29 act as trainer-leaders to qualified and interested young farmers and fisherfolk.

30 Sec. 8. *Access to Land.* - Short-leases, free land and agrarian reform schemes
31 shall be developed to provide access to land for young farmers:

- 1 A. Role of the DENR - The DENR shall explore the possibilities of extending short
2 term leases of public land to young farmers, provide free or subsidized land for
3 cultivation, and develop such other packages as would allow young farmers to
4 use available or unutilized agricultural land. In coordination with the LCDs and
5 SK, the Department may also create lease-to-buy programs;
- 6 B. Role of the DAR - The DAR shall facilitate and expedite the lease, distribution,
7 and award of agrarian reform land to young beneficiaries;
- 8 C. Role of the LGU and the SK - The LGU shall prioritize the lease and acquisition
9 of land for cultivation by young farmers. Further, the LGU and SK shall distribute
10 hillside or other under cultivated lands to young farmers, for farming and other
11 agricultural purposes;
- 12 D. Role of the SUCs - Whenever SUCs own or occupy excess landholdings, young
13 farmers shall be given the first option to use and cultivate such landholdings
14 for agricultural purposes.

15 *Sec. 9. Access to Financial Services.* - Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be
16 provided financial assistance and given access to financial services:

- 17 A. Role of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) - The LBP shall develop favorable
18 financial packages for young farmers and fisherfolk, waiving collateral, salary
19 and other typical bank requisites;
- 20 B. Role of the DA - The DA shall develop financial packages specifically targeting
21 young farmers and fisherfolk;
- 22 C. Role of the DTI- The DTI, through the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp),
23 shall extend loans to the young farmers and fisherfolk for the trade and
24 marketing of their agricultural products;
- 25 D. Role of the DOST, DICT, and DTI- The DOST, DICT and the DTI, pursuant to
26 RA No. 11337, and other programs, shall include agricultural enterprises for
27 qualified young farmer-and fisherfolk-entrepreneurs in their incubation efforts;
- 28 E. Role of CHED and TESDA - CHED and TESDA shall provide financial literacy
29 trainings, particularly in handling and managing loans and grants;
- 30 F. Role of the Private Sector - The private sector is encouraged to subcontract,
31 partner, and extend financial grants, initiate social partnerships and rural
32 development initiatives, as well as mentor young farmers and fisherfolk on

1 livelihood strategies, as part of their corporate social responsibility and other
2 community participation;

3 G. Role of the LGU - The LGU, in coordination with the SK, shall provide funding
4 and livelihood opportunities to young farmers and fisherfolk;

5 H. Role of the SK - The SK, using its ten percent (10%) Development Fund, and
6 other funds, shall provide entrepreneurial and finance packages for young
7 farmers and fisherfolk;

8 I. Role of the NYC - The NYC, in tandem with potential youth agro-entrepreneurs,
9 shall initiate donation and fundraising drives for the Program, exploiting for this
10 purpose online advertising, "crowd-sourcing", and other digital means to
11 generate funds for the Program.

12 Sec. 10. *Access to "Green Jobs."*- Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be given priority
13 in access to green jobs, as follows;

14 A. Role of the DOLE - The DOLE, through the SPES, shall include "green jobs",
15 reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, in
16 cooperation with LGUs. The DOLE shall prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk
17 for employment in public projects or private agro-industries and corporations.
18 The department shall also offer returning youth Overseas Filipino Workers
19 (OFWs) with a menu of possible investment projects where they will be assisted
20 in terms of proposal packaging, training, and management assistance during
21 the early stage, marketing, and linking with government financial institutions
22 (GFIs) and investment promotion agencies in case they qualify for fiscal and
23 non-fiscal incentives pursuant to Republic Act No. 11534 or the "*Corporate*
24 *Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act*";

25 B. Role of the TESDA - The TESDA shall develop on-the-job trainings, job fairs,
26 employment bridging initiatives, and private partnerships in producing,
27 processing, packaging, and marketing youth products;

28 C. Role of the DOT - The DOT shall prioritize the employment of young farmers
29 and fisherfolk in eco- and agro-tours, and encourage youth entrepreneurship
30 in farm and fishery tourism;

31 D. Role of the PEZA - The PEZA shall prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk for
32 jobs in agro-industrial ecozones, provide access to modern farm technology,

1 promote linkages in agriculture-related enterprise, and accelerate the creation
2 of "green jobs" for young farmers and fisherfolk;

- 3 E. The DA and the ATI - The DA, particularly the 4-H Club of the ATI, shall provide
4 jobs and embark upon farming start-ups in new and niche agricultural sectors
5 such as organic farming, agroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, dairy, livestock,
6 coffee, cacao, and other areas of farming and fishing. The DA and ATI shall
7 also create opportunities for youth leaders to harness their leadership skills
8 especially during the international month for youth.

9 Sec. 11. *Access to Markets.* - Young farmers and fisherfolk shall have access markets
10 through the following:

- 11 A. Role of the DTI - The DTI shall assist young farmers and fisherfolk in the
12 packaging, marketing and promotion of their products, including branding,
13 advertising, and subsidizing their participation in trade fairs and exhibits;
- 14 B. Role of the LGU - The LGU shall provide subsidized rental rates for public retail
15 areas and public markets, encourage agricultural tourism, and develop other
16 opportunities for young farmers;
- 17 C. Role of the Department of Tourism (DOT) - The DOT shall promote the products
18 of young farmers and fisherfolk through tourism conventions, events, and other
19 tourist souvenir sales opportunities;
- 20 D. Role of the Private Sector- The private sector is encouraged to market and
21 promote the products of young farmers and fisherfolk, as part of their Corporate
22 Social Responsibility (CSR) and other development efforts;
- 23 E. Role of the Media - The media shall promote and advertise the products of the
24 young farmers and fisherfolk and the Program.

25 Sec. 12. *Engagement in Policy Dialogue.* - The young farmers and fisherfolk are
26 encouraged to participate in policy dialogues, as follows:

- 27 A. Role of the NYC - The NYC shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are
28 represented in all decision-making bodies relating to the establishment of
29 mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the rights of young farmers
30 and fisherfolk;
- 31 B. Role of the SK - The SK, through local and Congressional youth representatives,
32 shall liaise with the Local Government Leagues and the Congress of the

1 Philippines to consult and engage young farmers and fisherfolk in policy
2 making;

3 C. Role of the DA - The DA shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are
4 equitably represented and consulted in its decision-making process to fully
5 realize the young farmers' and fisherfolk's role as agents and partners for
6 national development.

7 Sec. 13. *Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.* - Subject to the exceptions
8 provided in Sec. 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the "*First-Time*
9 *Jobseekers Assistance Act*", all government agencies and instrumentalities, including
10 government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, and government
11 hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from any young farmer and fisherfolk.
12 *Provided, That* such fee or charge is paid in connection with the application for and
13 the granting of licenses, proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other
14 documents usually required in the course of employment, locally or abroad. *Provided*
15 further, That the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.

16 Sec. 14. *Annual Report.* - The Council shall submit to the President and both
17 Houses of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following the
18 effectivity of this Act, a report giving a detailed account on the effective
19 implementation of this Act, and recommended legislation where applicable and
20 necessary.

21 Sec. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within ninety (90) days
22 from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR, in coordination with the DOST, DICT,
23 DOLE, DENR, DepEd, CHED, LBP, and NYC shall issue the necessary rules and
24 regulations for the implementation of this Act, which shall include the creation of a
25 database of youth involvement and interventions provided by government agencies,
26 a special desk for the youth, and an aggressive communication plan to upscale youth
27 involvement.

28 Sec. 16. *Appropriations.* - The amount needed to initially implement the
29 provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the current year
30 of the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such sums, as may be
31 necessary, for its continued implementation shall be included in the appropriation of

1 the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act
2 (GAA).

3 *Sec. 17. Separability Clause.* - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
4 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall
5 remain in full force and effect.

6 *Sec. 18. Repealing Clause.* - All laws or parts thereof, decrees, orders, rules
7 and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
8 modified accordingly.

9 *Sec. 19. Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following
10 its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
11 circulation.

Approved,