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S E N A T E

P.S. Res. No. 262

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PALPABLE AND EMERGING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF FILIPINOS AMIDST THE THREATS AND DANGERS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND CALAMITIES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THAT SYSTEMS AND POLICIES THAT WILL UPHOLD SAFETY AND RESILIENCY ARE INSTITUTIONALIZED

WHEREAS, the geographical location of the Philippines on the "Pacific Ring of Fire" and along the Pacific typhoon belt mean that the country experiences many forms of natural disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and fires;[1]

WHEREAS, the Philippines is particularly susceptible to being affected by climate change events, including sea level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and heavy rainfall. This is due to the archipelago's vulnerability to natural hazards, reliance on climate-sensitive natural resources, and extensive coastline, which are home to the country's main cities and most of the population. Sea levels around the Philippines are also rising faster than the global average, posing a greater risk of higher storm surges;[2]

WHEREAS, informal settlements, which comprise 45% of the urban population, are said to be particularly at risk from flooding due to precarious infrastructure;[3]

[1] Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (November 2021) *Philippines Disaster Management Reference Handbook.* Retrieved 28 September 2022, from https://www.cfe-dmha.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=h76R6jCvL24%3d&portalid=0
[2] *Ibid*
[3] *Id.*

WHEREAS, the Philippines has primarily experienced the following natural hazards in the past four decades (1970-2020): storm (55%), flood (25%), earthquake (5%), landslide (5%), and volcano (4%);[4]

WHEREAS, studies and research had projected that as a result of the fast-emerging climate change, all areas of the Philippines will have warmer temperatures, more intense typhoons, higher sea levels, and storm surges which can cause considerable loss of thousands of lives, billions in property damage, and social and economic disruption;[5]

WHEREAS, the country being among the countries hardest hit in the world by natural disasters with upwards of 20 tropical cyclones striking the country annually puts immense strain on our already overtaxed infrastructure;[6]

WHEREAS, in the 2020 World Risk Index (WRI), the Philippines ranked 9th in the world as the most affected country from extreme weather events with a score of 20.96;[7]

WHEREAS, Section 2 (a) of Republic Act No 10121, otherwise known as the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010", states that it is the policy of the State to "[u]phold the people's constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country's institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management and building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts";

WHEREAS, Section 2 (g) of the same specifically states that it shall be the policy of the State to "[m]ainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change in development processes such as policy formulation, socioeconomic development planning, budgeting and governance", particularly in the important areas such as public infrastructure and housing;

WHEREAS, while many laws have been written with the goal of ensuring the safety of buildings and infrastructures remains timely, what cannot be denied is that there have been vast discoveries that surfaced years since their inception. When some

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[4] Humanitarian Advisory Group. (January 2021) *Regional Consultative Group: Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia and the Pacific. Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in Emergencies: Toward a Predictable Model (2020 edition).* Retrieved 30 September 2022, from https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp- content/uploads/2021/01/RCG_Towards-a-predictable-model_2nd-ed__Final_electronic.pdf, p.131.

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[6] *Supra* Note 1.

[7] Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department House of Representatives. (March 2021). *Facts in Figures No.20.* Retrieved 01 October 2022, from https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/images/PDF%20Attachments/Facts%20in%20Figures/FF2021-20_World_Risk_Index_2020.pdf

of them were legislated, climate change was still a relatively new concept which though seen as a danger, still seemed very far away. However, climate change is here and now, and its debilitating effects have become ever more noticeable and felt in recent years;

WHEREAS, the World Bank has already warned that risks for catastrophic economic and human losses are driven, in large part, by unplanned and poorly planned urbanization which is aggravated by inadequate construction quality of the build environment;[8]

WHEREAS, frameworks and policies must be scrutinized in order to determine whether they adjust to the demands of the times in order to have systems, guidelines and infrastructures remain safe and fit to withstand natural calamities and disasters which are expected to come more frequently and with heightened effects;

WHEREAS, throughout the world, public buildings such as schools, hospitals, and critical government buildings have proved to be among the most vulnerable classes of structures. And, in the aftermath of disasters, these infrastructures are functionally critical in helping normalize the situation in affected areas and in mitigating a secondary wave of human and economic losses.[9] Considering that buildings including residences are in high-risk or prone to suffer catastrophic damage from natural phenomena as aggravated by climate change, there is a need to re-evaluate and reassess the sufficiency of existing laws to keep up with the times;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to recognize that the growing trends in the construction industry, modern urban planning, population growth, and disaster risk reduction necessitate a review of existing laws which, if juxtaposed with recent changes and advancements, could very well be considered as outdated and antiquated;

WHEREAS, echoing Climate Smart and Disaster Resilient ASEAN conference organizer Glenn Banaguas who remarked in 2019 that infrastructures have to be climate smart and disaster resilient "in order to save lives",[10] the Senate must review existing laws to determine the gaps which imperil the lives of Filipinos;

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[8] World Bank. (August 2014) *Safe and Resilient Infrastructure in the Philippines Applications of International Experience*. Retrieved 04 October 2022, from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/21732/ACS121820WP0Bo0B00P1310 4100PUBLIC00.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Philippine News Agency (25 April 2019). *PH structures should be climate smart, disaster resilient.* Retrieved 02 October 2022, from https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1068122

WHEREAS, the recent devastating disasters across the country like the destructive earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and typhoons that have destroyed homes and livelihood and even claimed lives, warrant consistent updating of our laws so that they are always to meet the modern demands of the 21st century and to take into consideration scientific discoveries which serve as guide in the construction of sustainable and disaster-resilient infrastructure and in the implementation of disaster-management policies;

WHEREAS, climate change has a direct and immediate impact on the natural disasters and calamities that strike the Philippines. As years go by, their destructive nature has escalated and worsened - damaging property and critical infrastructure, and wreaking havoc in the lives of those it along their path. Climate change is expected to lead to stronger typhoons, higher sea levels and storm surges which will cause deep floods and later will also affect the integrity of structural buildings;

WHEREAS, as a result of climate change, recent super typhoon "Karding" lodged wind signal no. 5 in the majority areas of Luzon, which took Filipinos by surprise because historically, these powerful natural calamities have rarely reached such intensity. It only proves the point that it is truly vital that existing laws be reviewed and updated so that systems are in place to ensure that crucial infrastructure, guidelines and facilities are maintained and made to withstand the debilitating effects of natural calamities and disasters;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation on the palpable and emerging effects of climate change to ensure the safety and welfare of Filipinos amidst the threats and dangers brought about by the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and calamities, with the end in view of ensuring that systems and policies that will uphold safety and resiliency are institutionalized.

Adopted,

RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.