

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

SENATE

Senate Bill No. 1326

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The health of the whole populace is a factor we cannot overlook in our thrust towards the development of the entire nation. Malnutrition has been identified as one of the major problems confronting our country today. According to reports, malnutrition is the third most common illness among school children.

The state bears the responsibility to respond to this alarming problem. We should be able to appraise the magnitude of the situation in order to be able to formulate and effectively carry out whatever response is necessary.

Nutrition is essential to survival as well as a critical factor in an individual's growth and capacity to function in society. As long as the problem of malnutrition continues to hang over the Filipino people, their struggle to improve their presently depressed socio-economic conditions may yet prove long and difficult.

The early approval of the bill is hereby requested.


MANNY VILLAR

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**AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL NUTRITION PROGRAM,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Title.--This Act shall be known as the Nutrition Act.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.--It is the declared Policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will insure 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; to defend and promote the right of children to assistance including proper care and nutrition and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

The State further declares its determination to eliminate hunger and to reduce all forms of malnutrition; That, hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable to end this human catastrophe.

The State maintains that nutrition is both an end-goal and a means to achieve development. It is a multi-factorial concern requiring inputs from all sectors. As such, nutrition shall be a priority of the government to be implemented by all its branches in collaboration with non-government organizations and the private sector in an integrated manner with focus to nutritionally and economically depressed areas, communities and households.

SEC. 3. Objectives.--The Nutrition Act of aims to improve the nutritional status of the country and its citizenry. Specifically, it aims to:

- (a) Strengthen the National Nutrition Council (NNC) as the policy-making body on nutrition;
- (b) Provide a policy environment conducive to nutrition improvement;
- (c) Provide mechanisms, strategies and approaches in implementing programs and projects to improve nutritional status and to eradicate malnutrition and hunger;

(d) Insure participation and cooperation of NNC-member agencies, other National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and the private sector in an integrated manner for the promotion of the nutritional well-being of the population.

SEC. 4. Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) and Strategies.-- The PPAN is the integrated short, medium and long-term plan of the government in response to the global call to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. It is the *country's blueprint for achieving nutrition adequacy for all as an important element for international competitiveness, people empowerment and human development.* The PPAN aims to reduce prevalence of protein-energy malnutrition, Vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency anemia and iodine deficiency disorders.

The PPAN shall employ a twin strategy: promotion of household food security; and the prevention, control and elimination of micro-nutrient malnutrition. It shall involve short, medium, and long-term interventions to address hunger and malnutrition. Further, programs to insure household food security through availability and accessibility of safe and nutritious foods shall be encouraged.

To wage war against poverty, access to credit shall be insured to help the poor cope with acute food shortages. A food and nutrition subsidy for the poor shall likewise be implemented to deliver food and other essential goods to low-income households and serve as an entry point for the delivery of other nutrition services. Specific behaviors shall be promoted through the adoption of desirable dietary practices to insure nutritional well-being.

SEC. 5. The National Nutrition Council.--The National Nutrition Council (NNC), composed of a Governing Board and a Secretariat, is the highest policy-making body on nutrition. It coordinates the formulation and the implementation of the *Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN).* It shall provide overall direction for the nutrition plans and programs and coordinate all others agencies which contribute resources and expertise for nutrition development.

In order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness, the composition of the NNC Governing Board is hereby expanded.

a. The Governing Board.-- The Governing Board (GB) shall be composed Secretaries or Heads of the following agencies:

- (a) Department of Agriculture (Chairman)
- (b) Department of Social Welfare and Development
- (c) Department of Health
- (d) Department of Education
- (e) Department of Interior and Local Government
- (f) Department of Science and Technology
- (g) Department of Budget and Management
- (h) Department of Labor and Employment
- (i) Department of Agrarian Reform
- (j) Department of Trade and Industry
- (k) National economic and Development Authority

(1) Three representatives from the private sector to be appointed by the President of the Philippines;

The Board shall create a Technical Committee or such other committee of experts as it may deem necessary, to act as the Council's advisory body on policy and program matters.

b. The Secretariat. - The Secretariat shall serve as the Executive arm of the Governing Board. It shall be headed by an Executive Director, assisted by two Deputy Executive Directors, all of whom shall be appointed by the President.

SEC. 6. Functions and Powers.--The Council shall have the following functions and powers:

- (a) Formulate national nutrition policies, plans, strategies and approaches for nutrition improvement;
- (b) Oversee and serve as a focal point in the integration of nutrition policies and programs of all member agencies and instrumentalities charged with the implementation of existing laws, policies, rules and regulations concerning nutrition;
- (c) Coordinate, monitor and evaluate programs and projects of both public and private sectors as well as of LGUs in order to insure integration of nutrition with national policies;
- (d) Receive grants, donations and contributions in any form from foreign governments, private institutions and other funding entities for nutrition programs and projects: Provided, That no conditions shall be made contrary to the policies or provisions of this Act;
- (e) Coordinate the release of public funds for the promotion of nutrition well-being of the country in accordance with the approved programs and projects; and
- (f) Call upon any government agency and instrumentalities comprising the pillars of the executive system for such assistance as may be required to implement the provisions of this Act in order to reduce and eventually eliminate malnutrition in the country.

SEC.7. Role of NNC-Member Agencies, other National Government Agencies, Local Government Units, and the Private Sector in the Nutrition Act of 1995.—Member agencies shall be responsible for insuring the implementation of programs and projects, development of promotive, preventive and curative nutrition programs, and integration of health and nutrition concerns into their respective policies and plans. It shall provide additional resources in any form in support of the local nutrition programs as a continuing involvement of the national government to local programs.

The consortium of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) shall intensify nutrition related training, research and extension support activities through the Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) Network Program of the Rural Poor and other relevant approaches, thereby strengthening delivery systems in partnership with the LGUs.

Local Government Units (LGUs), pursuant to the Local Government Code of 1991, shall provide and deliver basic nutrition services and facilities to the community. The LGUs shall integrate nutrition considerations in their short, medium and long-term development plans, and programs and shall coordinate with the Council in the enforcement of this Act. LGUs shall hire, train and deploy

nutritionists in every municipality, city and province. It shall also recruit, train and deploy Barangay Nutrition Scholars in every barangay in support of the local nutrition programs. Barangay Nutrition Scholars are community based volunteers responsible for the *delivery of nutrition services and other related activities in the barangay.*

Other National Government Agencies (NGAs) shall serve as important links in promoting nutrition in development through its participation in the *continuing advocacy for nutritional improvement, and integration of nutrition considerations in their sectoral plans and programs.*

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) shall be encouraged to undertake nutrition related researches and to recommend procedures and guidelines promotive of good nutrition among employees of agencies or members of NGOs. The Private Sector shall also be encouraged to provide technical and financial assistance to community-based nutrition projects as their participation in the country's human development efforts.

SEC. 8. Nutrition Improvement Fund--The Nutrition Improvement Fund (NIF) is hereby established and shall be provided as a grant to nutritionally depressed areas for the implementation of locally, initiated nutrition programs and projects. Requests of LGUs for funding assistance shall be submitted for appraisal and approval of the NNC.

SEC: 9. Appropriations.--An initial sum of Eighty Million Pesos (P80,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the Nutrition Improvement Fund as support to locally initiated nutrition programs; Thereafter, an appropriation for NIF shall be provided annually in the General Appropriations Act.

The funds needed by the National Nutrition Council (NNC) to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the NNC under the annual General Appropriations Act in addition to the appropriations of other department/agencies whose programs and activities are in support of the PPAN and this Act.

Funds needed by SUCs in implementing BIDANI and other nutrition approaches shall be incorporated in the annual appropriation of SUCs.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause.--If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any instrumentalities or entities or circumstances is held invalid or unconstitutional for any reason or reasons, the remainder of this Act or the application of such other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 11. Repealing Clause.--All laws and part of laws, decrees, orders, proclamations, issuance, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Saving Clause.--All laws and parts of laws, decrees, orders, proclamations, issuance, rules and regulations-which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly: Provided, That power, functions and rights already acquired and existing at the time of its passage shall not in any way be abridged, modified nor abated.

SEC. 13. Effectivity. --This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation whichever comes earlier.

Approved,