

PRESS RELEASE

“Leaving a Legacy of Addressing Hunger and Poverty”

Executive and legislative officials will meet Wednesday at the University of the Philippines to discuss concrete and positive steps to address hunger and poverty with the aim of eliminating the twin problems faced by majority of Filipinos through legislation.

The conference, “Leaving a Legacy of Addressing Hunger and Poverty”, will be held on Sept. 30 at the Malcolm Hall of the UP College of Law from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

One of the major steps to be considered in the discussions is the Zero-Hunger bill, also known as the Right to Adequate Food Framework Bill — Senate Bill No. 2137 and House Bill No. 3795. Leading the campaign for the passage of the proposed law is the National Food Coalition, a broad formation of more than 75 NGOs and people’s organizations representing farmers, indigenous peoples, urban dwellers, women, youth, and elderly. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the coalition are several congressmen and senators who have expressed their commitment to push the passage of the legislative measure.

The NFC convenor Aurea Miclat-Teves, sees hunger and poverty as among the cruelest forms of human rights violations of our people. These chronic problems also breed still other violations of our people’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Positive measures must be taken to address them and the NFC and their allies in the House and the Senate are urging other senators and congressmen to support the Zero-Hunger Bill.

As explained by Congressman Nograles, the bill provides a legal framework within which zero-hunger may be achieved progressively. It will provide an explicit guarantee to the right to adequate food, and clarifies its normative content, which includes the adequacy of food, its availability, accessibility, and being free of adverse substances and also culturally acceptable to consumers. The bill adopts a whole-of-government approach to the problem of hunger. It enumerates the human rights principles upon which it is based, namely, participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment, and rule of law.

The Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the House Committee on Human Rights have adopted their respective committee resolutions approving their separate versions of the bill. The Senate and the House are still to schedule the bill for plenary consideration, including the sponsorship speeches by the principal authors, as well as approval of a unified bill

by a bilateral conference committee. There is still hope that the bill will be passed by the current Congress, if is scheduled for plenary consideration and the two houses vote to approve it immediately, with only the signature of the president left for it to become law.

The National Food Coalition will also launch its website: righttoadequatefood.ph which contains all the essential components of RTAF.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Prof. Hilal Elver, recommended the immediate passage of this bill on the occasion of her official visit to the Philippines in February 2015. Brazil has been cited as a success story in which a zero-hunger law has helped lower hunger levels by as much as 70%.

The NFC is appealing to all Congressmen and Senators to seize the opportunity in their final months in office to take a decisive action against hunger. Giving a legislative expression to the congressional commitment to end hunger in the Philippines could very well be one of their most important legacies, according to the NFC.

PAGKAIN, SAPAT DAPAT!