

Republic of the Philippines  
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
**BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY**  
Cotabato City

*First Regular Session*

BTA Resolution No. 192

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Introduced by Introduced by: MP Engr. Baintan Adil-Ampatuan, MP Atty. Laisa M. Alamia, MP Amilbahar S. Mawallil, MP Engr. Don Mustapha A. Loong, MP Rasol Y. Mitmug, Jr., MP Rasul Enderez Ismael

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**RESOLUTION  
REQUESTING THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES  
TO RECONSIDER THE LOAN APPLICATION OF  
AL-SAHAR AGRI-VENTURES, INC.**

**WHEREAS**, in 2014 MILF Chairman Murad Ebrahim, now Chief Minister of the BARMM, called for companies to engage in agricultural ventures to employ former rebels as they rejoin the peaceful way of life of the rest of the Muslim people;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in response to the said call, Al-Sahar Agri-Ventures, Inc. (ASAVI), an exporter of cavendish bananas which operates in Talayan, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and Buldon, all parts in Maguindanao, was established to heed the call for private sector investment in labor-intensive, high impact agricultural projects in conflict areas.<sup>2</sup> The 400 of its 600-hectare banana plantation was harvested for export. This project was envisioned to be a 1,500-hectare banana plantation on which the company invested a little over P500 million in starting the project last November 2014;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in an article published last August 2015, ASAVI Director Ed Bullecer stated that, despite security issues the company decided to invest in the region “to help uplift the lives of the people and help propel economic development in the region”;

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<sup>1</sup> Villanueva, Marichu. Big Security Issue Looms in Mindanao. 30 September 2019. The Philippine Star. Accessed on 11 October 2019. <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2019/09/30/1956075/big-security-issue-looms-mindanao>.

<sup>2</sup> Apatan, Arianne, 01 October 2019, Banana workers, including ex-rebels, appeal for help amid Maguindanao plant closure. ABS-CBN. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/01/19/banana-workers-including-ex-rebels-appeal-for-help-amid-maguindanao-plant-closure>

<sup>3</sup> Villanueva.

**WHEREAS**, the ASAVI project had earlier been assured of government financial support through the Bangsamoro Investment Facility program dubbed as 'HARVEST FUND' offered by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funnelled through the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP);

**WHEREAS**, the Harvest fund was designed to support private sector initiatives in the Bangsamoro region, thereby creating job opportunities and help push the return to normal lives of rebel returnees especially in conflict-affected areas. However, the original fund amounting to \$125 million was later reduced to \$40 million;

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, ASAVI applied for a P1.6-billion loan from LBP for the development of its 1,333 hectares banana plantation. This was originally approved by the LBP Board of Directors. The same, however, was subsequently cancelled for undisclosed reason;

**WHEREAS**, similarly, in December 2018, ASAVI applied for the loan project with Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP). The latter advised the former that they were eligible to secure the loan, hence, the start of the approval process. ASAVI, however, has not yet received an official reason as to why their loan was being withheld.<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in a statement dated 24 September 2019, ASAVI announced the stoppage of its operations in the towns of Talayan, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and Buldon in Maguindanao after it failed to secure lending support from the two government banks;

**WHEREAS**, ASAVI provided employment opportunities to 1,039 workers, mostly MILF members. The job enabled them to send their children to school. This employment opportunity in ASAVI has been their family's main source of income for years;

**WHEREAS**, a thousand employees who are Bangsamoro constituents are appealing to the government to not close down the corporation as as they do not want their children to experience what they went through as rebels;

**WHEREAS**, the banana plantation's stoppage of operations bears an adverse effect on the investment climate of the region. The imminent job and economic losses would further impoverish Maguindanao and could create security issues which may complicate the transition to peace at the BARMM;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved by the Parliament to request the Land Bank of the Philippines to reconsider the loan application of Al-Sahar Agri-Ventures, Inc.

**Adopted,**

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<sup>4</sup>*ibid.*



MP ENGR. BAIN TAN A. AMPATUAN, CSEE

MP ATTY. LAISA M. ALAMIA, CESE

MP AMILBAHAR S. MAWALLIL

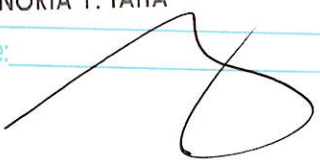
MP ENGR. DON MUSTAPHA A. LOONG, CESE

MP ATTY. RASOL Y. MITMUG, JR.

MP RASUL ENDEREZ ISMAEL

Republic of the Philippines  
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

**RECEIVED**

By: NORIA Y. TAHA Date: 10-21-19  
Signature:  Time: 3:00

Republic of the Philippines  
BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY  
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
OFFICE OF MP ENGR. BAIN TAN A. AMPATUAN  
**RELEASED**

By: RUFFA Date: 10-21-2019  
Signature:  Time: 3:00PM