



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY
Bangsamoro Government Center, Governor Gutierrez Avenue,
Rosary Heights VII, Cotabato City, Philippines

Bangsamoro Transition Authority)
Bangsamoro Autonomous)
Region in Muslim Mindanao)
1st Regular Session)

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 22

Submitted by the Committee on Labor and Employment

February 10, 2020

RE: Deliberation of Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Proposed Resolution No. 132.

Recommending for the approval of Proposed Resolution No. 132 with amendments.

Authors: MP Engr. Baintan Ampatuan, MP Atty. Laisa Alamia, MP Amilbhar Mawallil, MP Don Mustapha Loong, MP Atty. Rasol Mitmug, Jr., MP Rasul Ismael

Mr. Speaker,

The Committee on Labor and Employment has the honor to report back to the BTA Parliament, the Proposed Resolution No. 132, entitled: **"A Resolution Requesting the Land Bank of the Philippines to Reconsider the Loan Application of Al-Sahar Agri-Ventures, Inc."**. respectfully recommending for its approval with amendments, to wit:

1. The title of the Parliament Resolution No. 132 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"A Resolution Requesting the Intergovernmental Relations Body Represented by Minister Mohagher Iqbal, Head of IGR BARMM to Include in its Agenda the Request of Al-Sahar Agri-Ventures, Inc. for the Land Bank of the Philippines to Reconsider the Loan Application."

2. The last paragraph (12) of the proposed resolution is amended to read as follows:

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Intergovernmental Relations Body represented by Minister Mohagher Iqbal, head of IGR BARMM include in its agenda the request of Al-Sahar Agri-Ventures, Inc. for the Land Bank of the Philippines to reconsider its loan application."

Recommending that this Proposed Resolution shall be treated as a Simple Resolution.

received by: *saddam b. Benit* Respectfully Submitting,
02-19-20


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Chairperson



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Vice Chairperson



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Member

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HON. HATIMIL E. HASSAN
Deputy Speaker

HON. ATTY. LANANG T. ALI, JR.
Majority Floor Leader

HON. ATTY. LAISA M. ALAMIA
Minority Floor Leader

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

First Regular Session

BTA Resolution No. **132**

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

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS BODY REPRESENTED BY MINISTER MOHAGHER IQBAL, HEAD OF IGR BARMM TO INCLUDE IN ITS AGENDA THE REQUEST OF AL SAHAR AGRI VENTURES, INC. FOR THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES TO RECONSIDER THE LOAN APPLICATION

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;¹

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.² The 400 of its 600-hectare banana plantation was harvested for export. This project was

¹Villanueva, 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>.

²Apatan, 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>

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;³

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”;

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.⁴

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;

³Villanueva.

⁴*ibid.*

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, that the Intergovernmental Relations Body represented by Minister Mohagher Iqbal, head of IGR BARMM include in its agenda the request of Al Sahar Agri Ventures, Inc. for the Land Bank of the Philippines to reconsider its loan application.

Adopted,

MP ENGR. BANTAN 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