AgroSpectrum ASIA
Envisaging Future | Updating Present

Philippines Bangsamoro lawmakers file bill to boost Agri-fishery production & economy

04 July 2023 | News

To effectively deliver microfinance services to rural communities, the program will leverage mobile technology and digital platforms.



To effectively deliver microfinance services to rural communities, the program will leverage mobile technology and digital platforms.

Philippines Bangsamoro lawmakers are working together for the enactment of Parliament Bill No. 184, or the Bangsamoro Agricultural Microfinance Act of 2023, a measure seeking to provide small-scale farmers and fisherfolks with access to credit, adequate infrastructure, market linkages, and other support services to boost their farm production and income. The proponents of the bill include Parliament Members Amilbahar Mawalllil, Atty. Rasol Mitmug Jr., Atty. Sittie Fahanie Uy-Oyod, Hashemi Dilangalen, and Hamid Malik.

Aiming to effectively deliver microfinance services to rural communities, the program will leverage mobile technology and digital platforms. PB No. 184 covers farmers, smallholders, microfinance institutions (MFIs), rural banks, cooperatives, and other community-based organizations that provide agricultural microfinance services in the region.

Recognizing the significance of agriculture in the region, MP Mawallil emphasized in the billâ??s explanatory note that the sector provides livelihood to 70 percent of the population.

Small-scale farmers and fisherfolk in the Bangsamoro region face numerous challenges, such as limited access to credit, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient market linkages, and low productivity resulting from outdated farming practices and climate change. These challenges, Mawallil said, have led to decreased productivity and income for these individuals.

PB No. 184 seeks to establish the Regional Agricultural Microfinance Program, which will offer agricultural microfinance services to farmers and smallholders in the region. The program will be developed and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform and will be funded through various sources, including the regional government budget, grants, donations, concessional loans, and loans from commercial banks and financial institutions.

Community-based microfinance institutions will be established, and capacity-building programs will be conducted to enhance the financial management skills of community leaders and members.

Alarming data from the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2020 revealed that only 16.5 percent of households in the BARMM have savings accounts, leaving a staggering 83.5% of households without any form of savings.

MP Mawallil stressed the importance of improving financial inclusion in the region, especially in rural areas where most small-scale farmers and fisherfolk reside.

If the bill is passed into law, it has the potential to provide tailored financial services that can significantly enhance the productivity and income of small-scale farmers and fisherfolk in the Bangsamoro region.