

SENATE
Senate Resolution No. 786

Per

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

RESOLUTION

HONORING THE FORMER SENATOR HELENA Z. BENITEZ FOR HER SERVICE TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE AND ACKNOWLEDGING HER CONTRIBUTIONS AS A SENATOR, PIONEER ENVIRONMENTALIST, EDUCATOR, ADVOCATE OF CULTURE AND CIVIL SOCIETY LEADER

WHEREAS, Dr. Helena Z. Benitez was a distinguished member of the Philippine Senate from 1968-1972, authoring significant legislation on the environment and sustainable development long before these issues came to the forefront of national concerns;

WHEREAS, by heading the first Philippine Delegation on the UN Conference of the Human Environment (UNCHE) as the first Filipina and first woman president of the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, she brought various States to commit towards the preservation of the environment as a basic foundation of the continuity of life in the world;

WHEREAS, she pursued her commitment to sustainable development as a special adviser to Secretary General Maurice F. Strong in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (UNCED), otherwise known as the Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992 (UNCHE+20), providing valuable help in the success of the conference;

WHEREAS, her genuine dedication to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development resulted to:

1. The first-ever comprehensive report on the State of the Philippine Environment in 1971;
2. Congressional Joint Resolution No. 3 adopted by both Houses of Congress "establishing basic policies which shall guide the country in its efforts to bring about social and economic development through environmental planning;"
3. Republic Act 5752 - The Municipal Forests and Watersheds Act, which mandates every municipality and city to establish, develop and maintain a permanent forest and watershed within such municipality or city with a size equivalent to at least two percent of its entire area;
4. Republic Act 6147 - The Philippine Eagle Protection Act;

5. Republic Act 6148 - The Tamaraw Sanctuaries Act;
6. Republic Act 6239 - The Forestry Profession Law;
7. Republic Act 6541 - The National Building Code, the first nationally applicable building code.

WHEREAS, as the first Filipina chair of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, she successfully paved the way towards the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the General Assembly during her term in 1967, from which the working draft of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was based; this served as her strong ground for being named as a global leader who advances women's rights and development in the United Nations;

WHEREAS, her works led to significant firsts in honor listings: the first Filipina to be conferred the Presidential Award of the Order of Sikatuna, with a Rank of Datu, bestowed by former President Fidel V. Ramos; the founder of the first Filipino dance company, Bayanihan National Folk Dance Company (1957); first Filipina and first woman member of the Board of the International Association of Universities;

WHEREAS, Dr. Helena Z. Benitez will be celebrating her 98th birthday on June 27, 2012;

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Senate to acknowledge and make known its appreciation in behalf of the nation for her significant work as an invaluable member of this body, for her untiring dedication towards the betterment of women, the environment, and the country, and for serving as an inspiration to future generations of leaders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines, to honor the Former Senator Helena Z. Benitez for her service to the Filipino people and to acknowledge her contributions as a senator, pioneer environmentalist, educator, advocate of culture, and civil society leader.

Adopted,



LOREN LEGARDA
Senator