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NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. 469

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES OF THE
SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE DEMISE OF NATIONAL SCIENTIST
DR. ANGEL C. ALCALA

WHEREAS, Dr. Angel C. Alcala, Filipino biologist, National Scientist, the first Filipino ASEAN Biodiversity Hero, former Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), former Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and former President of Silliman University, sorrowfully passed away on 01 February 2023 at the age of 93;

WHEREAS, in 2014, Dr. Alcala was named a National Scientist of the Philippines through Proclamation No. 782 signed by former President Benigno Aquino III, in recognition of his research on the ecology and diversity of Philippine amphibians and reptiles, marine biodiversity, and marine-protected areas (MPAs);

WHEREAS, through his research, Dr. Alcala, along with his peers, added 50 new species of amphibians and reptiles out of the 400 known species in the Philippines. This gave international conservationists a reliable basis for establishing conservation programs on Philippine vertebrate biodiversity. Other subjects of his research were taxonomy and ecology of Philippine amphibians and reptiles supported by grants from the US National Science Foundation in Stanford University and the California Academy of Sciences, of which he is an Honorary Fellow;

WHEREAS, Dr. Alcala established the Sumilon Marine Reserve in Southern Cebu in 1974 and the Apo Marine Reserve in Southern Negros in 1982. Thereafter, a dozen similar marine reserves in Bohol Sea were established because of Dr. Alcala's advocacy;

WHEREAS, in 2017, Dr. Alcala was named an ASEAN Biodiversity hero, making him the first Filipino to be awarded such accolade, in recognition of his pioneering advocacy in the establishment of MPAs in the Philippines as well as his contributions to biodiversity conservation and in helping communities make their natural resources sustainable;

WHEREAS, in his interview with broadsheet Business Mirror during the awarding ceremonies for ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes, he emphasized the role of the private sector in biodiversity conservation, in words now oft-quoted by environment conservation advocates: *"Everything in this world is reduced to business. The resources that are used for business will eventually be gone, extinct,"* he said. *"Our role is to inspire young people. The trend now is use and more use of our natural resources for commerce. That we have to stop,"* he added. *"Businesses can actually earn, benefit from biodiversity. You don't exceed the limit or the capacity of the resource to cover. The natural resource capital must be kept intact and only the production from that capital should be used. In establishing MPAs, you produce more fish and you use only the fish produced by the marine reserves. The capital is left intact,"* he said, citing the lessons in establishing MPAs. In fighting for the environment, he said threats, harassments and intimidations experienced by young environmental advocates should not stop them from pushing for biodiversity protection and conservation;

WHEREAS, Dr. Alcala received many other recognitions for his passionate work toward protecting the Philippine marine ecosystem, including having been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship for Natural Sciences in the category for Organismal Biology and Ecology in 1963, the Ramon Magsaysay Award for pioneering scientific leadership in 1992, the Field Museum Founders' Council Award of Merit for his contributions to environmental biology in 1994, and membership to the Fulbright Philippines Hall of Fame in 2018;

WHEREAS, Dr. Alcala authored or co-authored more than 200 papers and books on Philippine herpetology, marine science, MPAs and biodiversity conservation in collaboration with noted scientists, like Dr. Walter C. Brown and Dr. Garry Russ. Two species of Philippine snakes are named in his honor: *Lycodon alcalai* and *Opisthotropis alcalai*, and one species of nudibranch is named in his honor: *Chromodoris alcalai*;

WHEREAS, the words of Dr. Alcala during the conferment of his ASEAN Biodiversity Hero award encapsulate the need to continue the work toward sustainability, especially as the harsh realities he spent most of his life striving to change still exist and are even exacerbated: *"For a successful biodiversity conservation project, the support of the people is needed. But, more important, the people will need a good leader to follow.*

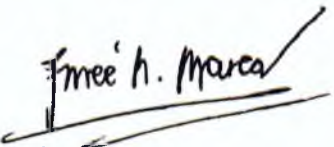
We need the support of people who will lead the people. That is why you have to work at various levels. Agencies of the government, policemen, soldiers can be good partners. Local governments or the leaders of communities can be good partners. People close to you, and other sectors, you have to involve everybody";

WHEREAS, as the Filipino nation mourns Dr. Alcala's passing, it is important to strengthen the institutional support for efforts toward marine biodiversity conservation in honor and continuation of Dr. Alcala's work and advocacy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, expressing the profound sympathy and condolences of the Senate of the Philippines on the demise of National Scientist Dr. Angel C. Alcala.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that a copy of this Resolution be furnished to the bereaved family of Dr. Alcala.

Adopted,


IMEE R. MARCOS