

Million-Hectare Forest Program

Florentino O. Tesoro

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Bamboo Professionals, Inc.,
and President, Kilusang 5K Foundation

Plenary Session 1:

How can the country attain sufficiency in wood and non-timber forest products?



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Outline of Presentation

1. Why we need the Million-Hectare Forest Program
2. Modality of Implementation
3. Supporting Strategies



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WHEREAS, the Philippines had a forest cover of 17 million hectares in the 1930s;

WHEREAS, massive logging followed by kaingin-making caused deforestation and degradation of the forest cover with only about 7 million hectares remaining, resulting in the loss of forest ecosystem services such as the delivery of timber and non-timber forest products, protection of watersheds and communities from the impacts of climate change, regulation of water supply and the conservation of biodiversity and maintaining the country's position as among the highly megadiverse countries in the world;



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WHEREAS, the Philippines is now importing over PHP 40 Billion worth of wood products while we were among the top-three exporting country in the 1960s and 1970s;

WHEREAS, the forestry contribution to the GDP is less than 1% in spite of the land for forestry occupying 50% of the country's total area, and forestry employment is very low, estimated at only 205,000 in 2021;



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WHEREAS, the upland communities are heavily dependent on the deforested timberland for farming and other livelihoods and are retaining control over the land even after the farms are abandoned when agricultural productivity becomes marginal;

WHEREAS, the Philippines' estimated cumulative climate economy-wide GHG emission is 3,340.3 MtCO₂e (metric tons CO₂ equivalent) under a BAU condition, and the Philippines green-house-gas (GHG) emissions-reduction and avoidance of 75%, of which 2.71% is unconditional, for the period 2020 to 2030 for the sectors of agriculture, wastes, industry, transport, and energy;



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WHEREAS, the Philippines must rehabilitate its forest resources and oversee their sustainable management, which are obligations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to help attain self-sufficiency in forest resources and climate resiliency of the Filipinos, improve their quality of life, generate sustainable livelihoods, and increase the contribution of forest resources to the economy;



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WHEREAS, EO 192 that created the Department of Environment and Natural Resources mandates the Department to assure the availability and sustainability of the country's natural resources to meet the demands for self-sufficiency in forest, mineral, and land resources of a growing population; and furthermore, enhance the contribution of natural resources for achieving national economic and social development;



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NOW THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR., President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order the establishment and implementation of the Million-Hectare Forest Program.



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Section 1. Purpose. The Million-Hectare Forest Program (the Program) is aimed at rehabilitating one million hectares of natural and emerging forests for the protection of watersheds and biodiversity and help the country fulfill its commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emission; and to establish one million hectares of agro-forestry plantations to make the country self-sufficient in timber and other forest products.



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Section 2. Forestland for the Program. Within sixty (60) days from the issuance of this Executive Order, the DENR through the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) shall identify and make available at least two million hectares of forestland for the Program including at least one million hectares of natural and emerging forests for protection and biodiversity conservation, and at least one million hectares of open timberland, for the establishment of agro-timber plantations.



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Section 3. Modality for the Use of Forestland of the Program. The modality of implementation of the Million-Hectare Forest Program shall be through Forest Management Units (FMU) whose areas of forestland are secured by tenure instruments, such as the Industrial Forest Management Agreement (IFMA), the Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA), Socialized Industrial Forest Management Agreement (SIFMA), and other tenure agreements.



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Section 3. Modality for the Use of Forestland of the Program (continuation). Local Government Units (LGUs) shall be encouraged to participate in the Program using their own resources especially those provided under the Mandanas Ruling. The Forest Management Units (FMU) concept shall also be the mode of project implementation by the LGUs.



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Section 4. Establishment, Capacity Building of Forest Management Units. The DENR shall promote the identification and establishment of community-based and private sector-led FMUs and institute a sustained capacity building program for the FMU operators and LGUs in the development and sustainable management of the FMUs.



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Section 5. Incentives. Stakeholders who will participate in the Program shall be provided the following incentives:

- (a) Assistance by the FMB and the DENR field offices in the acquisition of long-term tenure instrument and the formulation and approval of the Development and Management Plan of their forest management units (FMUs);
- (b) Assistance in enrolling their rehabilitated forests and agro-timber plantations for the purpose of establishing product chain-of-custody and for monitoring and reporting verification under the carbon credit and related mechanisms;



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- (c) Access to government funding;
- (d) Exemption from the payment of all forest charges in accordance with PD 705;
- (e) Be considered as investing in a pioneer industry and as such be given tax-free privileges in the importation of equipment and machineries in accordance with PD 705;
- (f) Prompt and free technical advice from the DENR, Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).



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Section 6. Task Force of the Million-Hectare Forest Program. There is hereby created a Task Force consisting of the DENR as the head and the DA, DTI, DOST, NCIP, and the SFFI as members. The Task Force may call upon the support of any department, bureau and office of the executive branch to assist in the performance of its functions. The DENR shall establish a Task Force Secretariat that is led by the FMB. The Task Force shall have the following functions:



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Section 7. Budgetary Support of the Million-Hectare Forest Program.

The Department of Budget and Management shall provide the DENR an initial budget for the Task Force in the amount of ONE HUNDRED MILLION PESOS (P100,000.000.00) which shall be sourced from the available funds of the government. Release of additional amounts shall be subject to the approval of the President.



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Section 8. Budgetary Support to the Forest Management Units. Under the supervision of the DENR, the annual appropriations of the National Greening Program shall be utilized by the Landbank of the Philippines, the Development Bank of the Philippines, and their instrumentalities in an interest-free lending program for the establishment of agro-timber plantations.



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Section 9. Role of the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau and State Colleges and Universities. The DENR Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau and the State Colleges and Universities shall refocus their research and development program to generate technologies supportive of the Program.

Section 10. Policy Support of the Program. The UPLB CFNR-Forest Development Center shall formulate and propose policies supportive of the Program to the DENR.



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Section 11. Repealing Clause. All executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts therefor, which are inconsistent with this Executive Order, are hereby revoked, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 12. Effectivity. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

DONE, this _____ at
_____.

FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
PRESIDENT



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