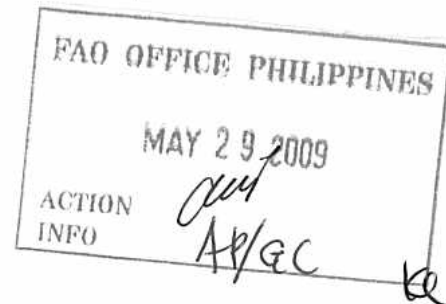




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28 May 2009

MR. KAZUYUKI TSURUMI
FAO Representative
Office of the FAO Representative in
the Philippines
29F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City



Dear Mr. **Tsurumi**:

This has reference to your letter dated 14 May 2009 requesting for inputs for the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) report on sustainable mountain development for the 64th session of the UN General Assembly.

Please find the attached updates on the activities/programs/initiatives related to mountain development activities in the Philippines since 2007 for inclusion in the UNSG Report.

Thank you and best regards.

Very truly yours,


MARLO D. MENDOZA
OIC Director

Updates on Mountain Development Activities since 2007

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, through the Forest Management Bureau, spearheaded a number of initiatives in the sustainable development in the uplands. These tend to strengthen sustainable forest management (SFM) implementation with focus on management tools, updating of management information, evaluation of protected and production forests, comprehensive upland development program, forest law enforcement, and relating forests to climate change. Moreover, there are also initiatives in the private sector on sustainable mountain development, in particular, creating awareness on the call to save the mountains of the world.

Criteria and indicators for SFM

The Philippine criteria and indicator system was prepared and adopted by government with assistance from ITTO. The purpose of the Philippine Set of Criteria and Indicators is to provide the government thru DENR and Forest Managers within the country an improved tool for assessing changes and trends in forest conditions and forest management systems. The criteria and indicators provide means of assessing progress towards the attainment of the objective set under Executive Order 318 otherwise known as "Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Philippines" and towards to the commitment to ITTO Year 2000 Objective.

The Philippines' auditing system of SFM at the FMU level (TLA, IFMA, CBFMA, and other types of management units with tenure on public forest lands) has been developed as the main analytical tool for the evaluation of performance and monitoring of FMUs. It is an internal audit by independent forest auditors to assess SFM performance and to serve as management tool to FMU managers by providing remedial measures to indicators and criteria that fail in meeting norms for SFM. The Philippine C&I system is used for auditing SFM performance of the FMU. All 7 criteria and 52 indicators applicable to the country will be audited.

Upland Development Program (UDP)

Pursuant to Executive Order 606 dated February 27, 2007 on sustainable upland development anchoring on food, wood, and non-wood security and economic productivity the DENR embarked on a comprehensive upland development program. The resources of the DENR for CY 2009 in forest development and management have been

substantially reconfigured in order to accelerate the restoration of the environmental service functions of vital watersheds and protected areas.

This program, in addition to simultaneously catalyzing the improvement of productivity of the uplands, creating incomes of upland poor, mitigating hunger among highly vulnerable populations, engaging organized upland communities the climate for gainful economic production for poor upland dwellers, is envisioned to accelerate reforestation and agroforestry development. This can be done by engagement of people's organizations and small landholders in priority upland areas and watersheds of the country and highly vulnerable protected areas and protection forestlands.

Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)

The promotion of Assisted Natural Regeneration practice for effective low cost forest restoration is currently ongoing through a FAO funded project. The project is focused on promoting and catalyzing the application of ANR in the Philippines through technology transfer and awareness-raising. Importance of private-public partnership, commitment of local communities and supportive policy environment were also highlighted in the project to ensure the sustainability of the ANR process.

Implementation of the new Philippine Tracking System

The new Philippine Timber Tracking System (PTTS) has enhanced field procedures in data gathering for the 7 nodes identified for chain of custody and timber tracking, software for data entry and report generation, and database for timber tracking.

The PTTS can be supplemented later by innovative methods by forest management units and operators to facilitate compliance with government procedures and policies produced in this project. This new management tool is a way forward to better forest law enforcement and chain of custody procedures for future national and international timber certification.

The FMB also computerized the forms for Certificate of Timber Origin / Certificate of Lumber Origin which is a vital management tool to monitor and track the interregional movement and legality of origin of locally produced forest products being transported and traded within the country.

Response to Challenges in Climate change

A Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (PTFCC) was already created to provide mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce the impacts of climate change from identified sectors including forestry. Climate change mitigation can be accomplished through conservation of existing forest cover and establishment of forest and agro-forestry plantations. Pursuant to this objective, the FMB, as a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change and also its Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC), evaluates all proposed Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects on afforestation and reforestation which include in and out-sourced financing approaches for forest development.

To date, the TEC has conducted scoping on the proposed CDM project of the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the National Power Corporation. At present a project funded by the WB is conducting GHG emission reduction on reforestation and agroforestry in the Laguna de Bay Lake area.

Watershed Protection

The DENR also created is a Task Group on watershed protection to undertake a survey and mapping of the protected areas of the country and the needed areas for forest land and these shall be clearly marked on the ground pursuant to the Constitution. Water resources and watersheds shall also be identified and protected and their water flow improved and their floral cover regenerated. There shall also be an inventory of flora and fauna in terrestrial and marine ecosystems principally harnessing the youth in their respective localities

Guidelines on Protected areas and biodiversity

Important guidelines were formulated recently to support protected area management and biodiversity conservation. A new list of threatened plants and wildlife species was established following IUCN categories. New guidelines were instituted for the assessment and delineation of boundaries between forestlands (PFE), national parks, and agricultural lands to secure and manage these land use categories. The National Integrated Protected Areas Systems (NIPAS) Law of 1992 or Republic Act No. 7586 was strengthened with revised implementing rules and regulations detailing and integrating all processes of concerned government institutions in establishing, managing, and de-establishing all protected areas under the law.

Private sector Initiatives

The HDI made the first call to Save the Mountains of the World in Mt. Apo in the Philippine in commemoration of the International Year of the Mountains in 2002. Several "calls" had been made across the globe with the aim to create awareness as well as "initiate, support and maintain local, national and global interaction for a common direction to save the mountains of the world". Through its calls, it has been translated into program of actions, influenced policy decisions and triggered interventions on emerging issues that confront mountains and its people. In 2008, the HDI made it to Mt. Galdhopiggen the highest summit in Scandinavia and the European Arctic. The call also focused on the alarming rate of the melting of the polar ice cap brought about by global warming. It was timely given the threatening impacts of climate change on all types of mountains.