

COUNTRY REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES, GREEN JOBS AND DECENT WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

A. Environmental Problems

The Philippines are prone to natural disasters, particularly typhoons, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, lying as it does astride the typhoon belt, in the active volcanic region known as the “Pacific Ring of Fire,” and in the geologically unstable region between the Pacific and Eurasian tectonic plates. The Philippines also suffers major human-caused environmental degradation aggravated by a high annual population growth rate, including loss of agricultural lands, deforestation, soil erosion, air and water pollution, improper disposal of solid and toxic wastes, loss of coral reefs, mismanagement and abuse of coastal resources, and overfishing.

Climate Change and the Philippines



PEDRO Malate and son Miguel survey the ruins and desolation left behind by Supertyphoon “Reming” in the village of Tagas, in Daraga, Albay on Saturday as Mt. Mayon looms in the background. EDWIN BACASMAS

Recent scientific studies reveal that human activities have contributed significantly to the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that causes climate change.

The Philippines is a hotspot for climate change disasters particularly the risk for agriculture and food security due to extreme El Nino and severe tropical cyclones. The spread of infectious diseases are influenced by fluctuations in climate variables, temperature, relative humidity and rainfall. Sever super typhoons like Reming that pummeled the Bicol region in 2006 destroyed at least \$90-million worth of agricultural products and infrastructure.

Diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, cholera have increased throughout the years. Climate change impacts on coastal zones and marine ecosystems caused massive coral bleaching especially in 1998 due to elevated sea temperature and fish kills and red tides like the one that occurred in 1992 which was an El Nino period.

Scientists warned the Philippines could experience famine by 2020, as the adverse impact of global warming takes its toll on natural resources. Thousands will be displaced from their homes especially in low-lying coastal communities.

Decline of Natural Resources and Biodiversity

The Philippines is suffering from degradation of the natural environment. It has fifty major rivers now polluted due to abuse and neglect. Approximately two-thirds of the country's original mangroves have been lost. A hundred years ago, the Philippines had close to 22 million hectares of old growth forest. At the start of 2000, we had less than 600,000 hectares of old-growth forest left. In one century, we had cut down close to 97 percent of our original forest. A study by the Environmental Scientists for Social Change (ESSC) reveals that we have systematically cut this forest down and that we have not stopped its destruction and that of its core biodiversity.



The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) estimates that it takes over 4,000 liters of water to produce one kilo of rice. Because of the loss of forests, we have less water since most of our freshwater comes from watersheds found in forests. Therefore, loss of forests means loss of food.

More than 400 plant and animal species found in the Philippines are currently threatened with extinction, including the Philippine eagle, the tamaraw, and the dugong. In 2001, 49 of the nation's mammal species, 86 bird species, and 320 plant species were threatened with extinction. Endangered species in the Philippines include the monkey-eating eagle, Philippine tarsier, tamaraw, four species of turtle (green sea, hawksbill, olive ridley, and leatherback), Philippines crocodile, sinarapan, and two species of butterflies. The Cebu warty pig, Panay flying fox, and Chapman's fruit bat have become extinct.

Alarming Waste Problem in the Philippines



The Philippines is looming with garbage problems despite the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act or the Republic Act (RA) 9003.

2007 first quarter data from the National Solid Waste Management Commission shows that there are 677 open dumpsites, 343 controlled dumps, and 21 landfills in the country. An additional 307 dump sites are subject for closure or rehabilitation plans but without definite schedules for enforcement. About 215 additional landfills are being proposed to be set up nationwide.

About 1,000 open and controlled dump sites exist in the country. Prominent dumps all over the country can be found in Antipolo and Montalban in Rizal; Baguio City; Calapan, Mindoro Oriental; Carmen, Cagayan de Oro; Mandurriao, Iloilo City; Obando, Bulacan; and San Pedro, Laguna.

Environmentalists stress that Republic Act 9003 calls for the adoption of the best environmental practices in ecological waste management and explicitly excludes waste incineration as an ecological option. These polluting disposal facilities are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere which adds to global warming. Landfills and open dumps, according to studies, account for 34 percent of human-related methane emissions to the atmosphere, a global warming gas that has 23 times more heat-trapping power than carbon dioxide. These landfills and open dumps are illegal under RA 9003.

Incinerators, on the other hand, have significantly higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions (per kilowatt) than a coal-fired power plant when all of the carbon coming out of an incinerator stacks is measured. Such emissions are banned by the country's Clean Air Act.

Inaction on garbage contributes to the death of at least two persons every minute due to complications from environmental problems, which could be prevented if the country only developed a more efficient environmental management program.

Mismanagement of waste has serious environmental consequences: ground and surface water contamination, local flooding, air pollution, exposure to toxins, and spread of disease. Many of the disposal sites contain infectious material, thus threatening sanitation workers and waste-pickers.

Annual waste generation in the Philippines is expected to grow 40 percent by 2010. Improvements in recycling, collection, and disposal will become even more critical as garbage production continues to increase with population growth and economic development.

Past efforts to promote waste segregation at source have minimal impact despite the presence of Republic Act 9003. Most of these were barangay, city, and municipal ordinances providing for sanctions and penalties for non-compliance. Campaigns, seminars, trainings and other different community activities were implemented with the help of various private groups or NGO's to pursue the objective of solving the garbage problem.

RA 9003 further calls for the establishment of materials recovery facilities, or ecology centers, in every barangay or cluster of a barangay. To date, only 1,923 ecology centers exist, serving 2,133 barangays of a total 41,975 nationwide. In Quezon City alone, only 52 barangays have established Materials Recovery Facilities out of a total of 142.

People's Behavior towards Waste

Behavior is a key cultural aspect that is embedded in people's way of life. Studying a community's behavior and introducing new ones requires intensive, long-term, and creative social marketing. This can be done by studying the demographic and cultural fiber of the community through immersions and capacity building activities.

The Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies, Inc.'s (REECS) 2002 study on household waste management systems and the attitudes and behavior showed that:

1. Waste management is still perceived by many as the responsibility of government.
2. Public participation in waste management, especially in segregation at source, remains limited.
3. More extensive awareness- raising activities and training on ecological waste management are needed, together with stricter enforcement of the Law and local ordinances must be observed.
4. There is lack of community empowerment and political will to resolve the problem.

Recognizing the importance of the environment's immediate recovery and effects of improper waste management to the Philippines, there is a need for understanding and reformation of attitudes and concern towards the protection of environment. The impending garbage crisis can be prevented if we only practice waste segregation at source, recycling, and composting as what the law requires. An intensive social marketing program has to be established on a long-term scale within a barangay – the smallest unit of the local government.

B. Economic Problems

- high population growth
- unequal distribution of wealth
- poor performance of the agriculture sector of the economy.

C. Social Problems

- Corruption
- Poverty
- Overpopulation
- Child labor (a form of child abuse)
- Lack of adequate health care services
- Terrorism
- Prostitution
- Unemployment

SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

1. Participatory Communication for Development

- Social Capital/ Community Empowerment
- Developing Community Leaders
- Engaging multi-sectoral participation (youth, schools, businesses, church, etc.) in community design and planning

2. Community Immersion

- Immersion and Research on Community's sociographic and psychographic profile
- Community Interaction with women, youth, and local community officials
- Environmental Education Workshops and Demos
- Environmental Education lessons to be familiar with a variety of ways in understanding the environment and the ecological crisis
- Exploration of local Biodiversity
- Evaluation of Stakeholders' Available Skills and Resources
- Evaluation of community's existing level of environmental awareness

3. Community IEC Campaigns

- Development of local environmental campaigns
- Distribution and Exhibit of created IEC materials
- Flyers and Posters

4. Environmental Management Capacity Building Workshops for Community

- Hands-on Household Ecological Solid Waste Management Trainings
- Training on Creating Ordinances for local community officials
- Establishment of Materials Recovery Facilities in Local Schools and Community Center/s
- Appointment of stakeholder representatives – women sector, youth sector, etc.

5. Environmental Management Capacity Building Workshops for local School

- Environmental Education Facilitator's Training for Teachers – Project Learning Tree, Water Education for Teachers, Watershed Box and Ecological Solid Waste Management
- Developing Creative and Environmentally relevant modules and classroom activities

The Philippines' Response to the Problem of Climate Change

As a manifestation of the country's commitment to engage in multilateral efforts aiming to address the global problem of climate change and achieve sustainable

development, the Philippines has participated in the discussions and negotiations leading to the ratification of various international agreements. These international agreements are geared towards the mitigation of the effects of climate change and the strategic adaptation to the conditions. The most important outcomes of these negotiations include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ratified on August 2, 1994 and the Kyoto Protocol, which was ratified on November 20, 2003. At the national level, the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan of 2004-2010 (MTDP) underscored the need to manage the environment more effectively in order for the country to address the problem of poverty particularly in the rural areas.

As one of the first countries to sign the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, the Philippines expressed adherence to the principles of sustainable development and environmental preservation based on the notion of equity and the unique capabilities of the participating countries. More specifically, Article 3 of the UNFCCC states that countries who have aligned themselves with the mandates set forth by the Convention “should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”

Under the Kyoto Protocol, developing countries such as the Philippines are called to pass and implement national measures that shall advance the international community’s agenda pertaining to environmental preservation through the reduction of greenhouse emissions (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Pursuant to the provisions in this treaty, the Philippines passed national legislations to uphold the agreements embedded in the Kyoto Protocol. The Clean Air Act of 1999, otherwise known as Republic Act 8749, was enacted in order to arrive at an effective air quality management program that will mitigate the worsening problem of air pollution in the country. Reinforcing the country’s drive towards a healthier environment was the enactment of the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003) that aimed at providing a comprehensive solution to the country’s garbage problem.

At the institutional level, the Philippines was one of the earliest countries to recognize the importance of a systematic institutional response to the problem of climate change. Prior to the signing and ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change (IACC) in May 8, 1991 under the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was a concrete manifestation of the Philippines’ attempt to promptly address the issue of climate change. Composed of representatives from government agencies as well as NGO representatives, IACC was created by virtue of Presidential Order No. 220 with the secretary of the DENR sitting as chair and the secretary of the DOST as co-chair. The ultimate aim of the committee is to harness and synergize the various activities being undertaken by the national government and civil society in response to the crisis posed by growing problem on climate change.

The essential mandate of the IACC is to perform various coordinative, development and monitoring functions with respect to activities related to climate change in the county. As an organization that is at the forefront in advancing the government’s climate change agenda, the IACC likewise formulates policy actions and

recommendations while at the same time assumes a very significant role in terms of shaping the Philippines' national positions in the various international negotiations that aim to mitigate the effects of global climate change and prevent the worse possible consequences of this. The IACC therefore ensures the Philippines' faithful compliance to the mandates and principles contained in the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol and sees to it that adequate public awareness campaign and initiatives are held to bring the issue to all the sectors of the country.

PHILIPPINE CLIMATE CHANGE ACT OF 2007

This bill seeks to create a National Framework Program on Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Communication and establish mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy, power, transport and manufacturing sectors to usher in a low-carbon revolution in the Philippines and institutionalize the country's commitments to international efforts to address the problem on climate change

The Philippines' Upland Development Program: cushioning the impacts of global financial crisis and climate change through green jobs

Jose L. Atienza, Jr

Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Philippines, Quezon City, the Philippines.

The program will create thousands of jobs in restoring forests and watersheds, helping to mitigate hunger and poverty.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Philippines has created the Upland Development Program in support of the government's Economic Resiliency Plan, launched in February 2009 to cushion the impact of the global financial crisis on the Filipino people. The program aims to improve incomes in upland areas and mitigate hunger, while also enhancing the country's capacity to adapt to climate change. Forestry has a major place in

meeting both challenges, since upland populations are highly dependent on forest resources for subsistence and livelihood, and forests serve as a natural carbon sink.

An interesting feature of the program is its strong support to the government's hunger mitigation and poverty alleviation programs – for example, by helping to meet the raw material requirements of industries involved in the Trade and Industry Department's "One Town One Product" scheme, which encourages towns to specialize in a single product according to local comparative advantage in resources and skills.

The scheme's intent is to ramp up production while promoting entrepreneurship and creating income opportunities, especially for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The Upland Development Program's linkage to this scheme ensures ready markets for the products generated under the programme, further enhancing livelihoods of people's organization members.

Two (2) ILO green jobs programs are currently being implemented in the Philippines: **(a) Greener Business Asia (GBA)** with support from the Japan Government, and **(b) Green Jobs Promotion** with support from the Australian Government. The GBA Project aims to develop and promote enterprise-level approaches that improve productivity and contribute to "greening" the economy. This is done by enhancing worker-management relations to include environmental performance as among the key objectives for the enterprise, and jointly work on activities that best demonstrates this. The GBA aims to encourage social partnerships and dialogue to promote environment friendly activities of enterprises. At the sector level, these enterprises will be supported to collaborate on common environmental performance indicators, fostering the move to become a more sustainable production chain. Implementation of the GBA and Green Jobs projects include the participation of the tripartite constituents.

Trade Union's Recommendations in Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Development

- Workers can be an asset for environmental protection. They can undergo training on environmental legislation, the environmental commitments of the company, and general environmental standards.
- Workers should be recognized in future environmental impact assessments as stakeholders.
- Workers should bargain for the right to stop work on the basis of unsound environmental conditions.
- Workers can set up a structure such as .safety circles, where workers can speak freely on the environmental impacts of mining operations.
- Workers should bargain for an .economic displacement fund. or .environmental guarantee fund to be provided for in case of a similar event in the future.
- Workers should be aware of environmental management tools and work for their adoption. These tools include multi-partite monitoring teams and environmental audits, among others.

Trade unions are engaged in environment policy discussions, particularly and mostly with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The TUCP is member of the Philippine Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), a government council that development and monitors sustainable development programs. Environment policy is a tripartite issue. The Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC) discusses issues and policies related to green jobs and sustainable development programs at the workplace. Some TUCP unions have signified interest in negotiating for green provisions in their collective bargaining agreements.

Trade unions are engaged in discussions and preparations of the ILO's Decent Work Country Program. However, union programs and priorities are stymied by lack of

dedicated funds for union activities. Trade union priorities do not fit-in in approved projects. Capacity-building programs for trade unions are wanting.

The TUCP has a policy titled: ***"Towards Decent Work, Green Jobs and Sustainable Development."*** It highlights TUCP's resolve to take actions that promote green jobs, build trade union leadership, commitment to make enterprises greener, and monitor progress/developments. The TUCP has implemented several green jobs and decent work capacity-building initiatives, including national and regional workshops. Furthermore, the TUCP has an action checklist titled: "Action Checklist on Decent Work, Green Jobs and Sustainable Workplaces." It is a tool that trade unions can use to assess current conditions and a way to identify low-cost, easy-to-implement, and high impact improves to make jobs in enterprises decent, greener and sustainable (safe and healthy).

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