

The Country's Environment and Natural Resources

SEC. FACTORAN : The natural resources of any country have always played an integral role in development. It is therefore important that these resources should be wisely utilized, protected, developed and managed in order that national development can be realized.

Status of Resources

About 97% of the total Philippine land area or 29 million hectares have been classified as of the yearend 1987. Of these, 14 million hectares or 47% are classified as alienable and disposable, habitable lands that could be cultivated. While 15 million hectares are classified as forest lands, the terocarp forests cover 4.839 million hectares but only 900,000 hectares are old-growth and 3.6 million hectares are young-growth. Mangroves cover 144,000 hectares. Pine such as those in Baguio, cover 238,800 hectares. The total volume of timber resources and forest lands is estimated at 1.2 million cubic meters, consisting mostly of the terocarp species. The terocarp species include Narra, Lawaan and the like. There are a total of about 59 national parks, covering an aggregate area of almost 39,000 hectares. These contain natural scenic beauty with plants and animals, and historic and cultural sites which are supposed to provide enjoyment to more than 70,000 visitors in 1988. Present records indicate that the country has 1,075 bird and animal forms, with at least 110 species categorized as rare and endangered due to man-induced activities. Furthermore, there are 14 species of Philippine plants listed as endangered. The rare and endangered species include the world famous Philippine Eagle, the Tamaraw, the Philippine Tarsier, the Dugong or Sikaw, the Philippine Crocodile, the Monitor Lizard and the Giant Turtles, otherwise known as Pawikan.

The present structure and functional make-up of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources can be found in Executive Order #192. The task of protecting the environment was incorporated to the functions of the then basic Ministry of Natural Resources.

Structure

Structurally, we now have one department proper consisting of the central office of the Secretary, 14 regions and six-staff bureaus which were formerly land bureaus. The six-staff bureaus include those forestry, land, mines, research, environment and parks and wildlife. The legalization of our operations is designed to deliver the basic services to our people at a much faster rate than before. Similarly, the authority of the secretary. Now, about 75% to 80% of all authority already rests in the regional levels.

In like manner, 85% of our budget is actually distributed to the regions for their operations and 15% is left to service the office of the secretary and the six-line agencies.

Vision

The vision statement that we have adopted to guide everyone in the performance of our duties is to promote the well-being of the Filipino people through sustainable development of forest resources, optimal utilization of lands and minerals, social equity and deficiency of resource use and effective environmental management. A number of major issues and problems presently confront the natural resources sector. Some of these are resource depletion, environmental degradation, inequitable distribution and allocation of lands and natural resources, poverty in the upland, continuous influx of migrants from the lowlands, tenurial problems in public domain, rationalization of forest-based industries, re-promotion and rationalization of small-scale mining operations, etc. Among the more important projects that we have are the following: a sustained yield forest management, a program which focuses on the development and implementation of forest management schemes based on the principle of sustained yield and multiple use management; and the rehabilitation of denuded and marginal lands, a program that focuses on the

mobilization of government, private and community resources to ensure the sustainable development of the uplands. Private entrepreneurs, resource community, dependent communities and NGOs are tapped to assist the government in rehabilitating denuded and marginal lands through contract reforestation, development of tree plantations, farms and community reforestation, etc. Right now, reforestation is the major project of the department. The program has been given additional impetus by the Asian Development Bank and the OECF of Japan, which jointly granted us loans of \$240 million with very concessional terms to be spent within 3 to 5 years. The strategy that we adopted in is to give reforestation rights away by contract to private enterprise because the government has proven to be a very inefficient implementor of reforestation projects. Take the case of the Osmena reforestation project in Cebu which was started as far back as 1916. Billions of pesos were poured into the project, but the result has been almost absolutely zero.

We are also heavily involved in program D in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. In fact, as in the DENR, our program is the biggest component of the entire CARP. This would include the giving away of alienable and disposable lands and the provision of some forms, security of tenure to occupants of forest lands which cannot be disposed of. We are also in the process of piloting community-based forest management projects. The essence of community-based forest management is to allow the people living in the community to take care of the forest, to defend that forest, re-plant the forest and to harvest the forest. The ultimate thrust of the department which hopefully can be in good place by 1992 would be to allow communities living within the forest or around the forest to be the ones to harvest the products of the forest.

Another big project of the department is the promotion and rationalization of the small-scale mining activities. You might have heard of the several locations in the Philippines where small-scale miners have been left to their own devices, sometimes losing their lives in the process but many times also, making a lot of money because of the gold that they dig from the ground. Right now, the legal status of such mining activities is absolutely illegal, that is, no law would authorize these because the traditional legal system is already covered by claims all over. So that the small miners who come in Diwalwal, Mount Diwata or in Borichon or in Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte dig, process and sell gold are really doing supposedly illegal activities. We have more or less used our moral persuasion to deter the big mining companies from making too much of a fuss, or kicking these people who, in fact, can no longer be kicked out. There are too many of them, sometimes reaching 80,000 in one area. But in any case, we have submitted the small-scale mining law to the Congress which would legitimize this practice and give the government a handle to force the people who are involved in small-scale mining activities to try to impose their lot or take precautions so that they would no longer in such great risks.

The department is, likewise, studying ways of promoting community-based approaches to resource management, for specific application to ancestral lands. Let me state, however, that tribal communities, even now, can avail of the program through the issuance of negotiated contracts. For example, as regards timbers found in recognized tribal lands and indigenous cultural communities, we are, by policy given preference in the awarding of the timber-production-sharing agreement. On the environment, our big project is to try to strengthen the environmental impact assessment. The EIA requirement puts as a legal and prerequisite the implementation of environmentally critical projects and projects to be located within the environmentally critical areas. Effective implementation, however, requires strengthening of institutional linkages as well as undertaking activities like streamlining of licensing requirements, mobilization and training of environmental officers and intensification of monitoring projects. The imposition of the total ban on export of naturally-grown species is a very basic change in policy. Only logs from plantation species are allowed to be exported and this has amounted to something like 578,000 cubic meters, worth \$36.5 million. Plantation species are the fast growing species. A second achievement is that no new TLAs have been granted. This is a record of sorts because your parents will tell you that, any time there is a change of government in the Philippines, the first thing that has to be renewed is the TLAs, the timber-licensing agreement clearance in order that the TLAs of those who were less than cooperative with the government could be cancelled. Whatever is said about this government the fact is that, the timber-licensing agreement is not one of the political favors that one could suspect to have been granted because nothing has been granted so far.

There has been increased vigilance in the enforcement of forest laws, rules and regulations which have resulted in the highest levels of timber confiscation in the department's history. In 1987, we were able to confiscate more than 45,000 cubic meters of timber. In 1988, we had already gotten about 50,000. I believe that there has been nothing in the past records in the department that would compare to such confiscations. This comes at the time when there is almost no timber to cut, and illegal logging continues.

A third item of which we are particularly proud is that we are trying to fix the forest charge to keep up with the current market price. The difficulty is that we cannot change the forest charges for the existing timber license agreements. But we are imposing a new one on those TLAs that have expired or which have been violated and which have to be reserved. Formerly, the forest charges for every cubic meter of timber cut was P30. To give you a comparison of how ridiculous this is, the average selling price of 1 cubic meter was P1,500. To remedy this, we have put in place several price changes in the TLAs that we could touch and they are now paying something like P300 per cubic meter. We are expecting Congress to allow the DENR to fix forest charges at much higher level than that.

Another item of achievement is the fact that we have successfully persuaded the international financial community into recognizing reforestation as a developmental activity resulting in ADB and OECF loans. Prior to our assumption of the DENR, we were one of the most cash-starved in terms of project funds because no one wanted to either lend money or yield grants in substantial amounts to our department. Most of the grant money was being given through agriculture. Now, we have the biggest grant given within a couple of years and we are very proud that the ADB, at least, has now recognized reforestation to be a proper developmental activity to be attended to, to be paid attention to. We are still in the process of trying to persuade the World Bank since they still hesitate to look at reforestation as a developmental activity and therefore, they insist on their standard interest rates and conditionalities which, of course, cannot be accepted in the forestry sector. For the first time in its history, DENR now has access to three sets of current natural resources data. Three sets of data that could be rechecked with each other, namely Swedish spotland satellite imagery, a German mapping and an American-produced map. So we could really now say for certain what the real status of the forests are. Prior to this, there were only estimates and some of them were very poor estimates.

Similarly, we have had the good fortune of being able now to finish and place in diskette form the first collection and compilation of more forestry laws and administrative rules and regulations. It is quite amazing that although forestry has been a rather significant department, it has been a concern for the government for quite sometime. There has never been any compilation of the rules and regulations so that, it was really up to the bureaucrats to say what the law was as of a particular date and at a particular time. That has been remedied so it is not just up to the bureaucrats to pinpoint the laws but, it is also up to the librarians.

We have been asked what our visions were and in this respect, we had very concrete visions of what we want to do. In the area of forest renewal and rehabilitation, we are aiming for the reforestation of some 300,000 hectares of open and denuded forest land, the establishment of some 125,000 hectares of industrial tree plantations, and the establishment of 10,000 to 15,000 hectares of rattan plantations by 1992. We are likewise, programming for the rehabilitation of some 65,000 hectares of mangrove forests. At the same time, we shall push for the cancellation of timber licensing clearances of all irresponsible licenses in support of the achievements of reforestation. Eventually by 1992, we foresee that there cannot be more than 50 TLAs remaining. We expect, as a matter of fact, to have less than 50 but to say it out loud will be very destabilizing to the industry at the moment.

On mineral resources, we expect that during the next 4 years, the contribution of the mining industry to the gross national product will be doubled. On the environment, we expect, and this is a very difficult promise, but we expect as a vision, a 50% improvement of air quality in Metro Manila. We promise, however, by 1992, a 100% compliance to pollution control laws by large-scale industries. We, likewise, envision in 1992, and we promise, the implementation of a gigantic Manila bay rivers revival program. And by 1992, we are targeting a 50% improvement of water quality of the Tulyahan river.

On ancestral land, we expect to have a clear, unambiguous policy on the land claims of the cultural communities, a mechanism to adjudicate will be established, the claims and counter-claims on ancestral lands will starting now, be surveyed and mapped.

PROF. BAILEN : I am more interested in the decision-making in which significant decisions that affect our environment are made in your office, Mr. Secretary. Decision-making and the forces that eventually help dictate the kinds of actions that your office is made to take are more important and crucial. Sometimes we are captive of the myth that all we need is a nice, democratic election and we have a popular president who can have trusted and very pleasing technocrats to man the bureaucracies and voila, everything will go well.

Your discussion gave the impression that everything that happens, as far as our environment and natural resources are concerned, is decided in your office, as if it is something that is a self-contained thing. So, what I would like to get at, Mr. Secretary, is, what are the kinds of decisions that find their way into your office? There are some perceptions that some anti-ecology and anti-people decisions might have been made and implemented. Are there some forces outside the bureaucracy, that sometimes make their way into this decision-making process? How important are these? I think, that's a very important aspect that we should look into. I understand what is going on enables us, the people in the academe, in the private sector, among the non-governmental organizations, to find some ways to intervene in matters that would affect our environment and natural resources.

DR. LUNA: I've been writing unextensively about the environmental problems and I think the last article I wrote was published by NEDA. I'm interested in reforestation, Mr. Secretary. What are the guidelines in your reforestation projects? How closely does a fully reforested area approximate the original vegetation to gain more light on macro-geomathology, water and soil characteristics? Is it possible for the forested area to once again attain the natural climax or is it an anthropogenic climax that had much closer interrelationship of men and land in the area? Is this mirror land authorization actually a very destructive form of land authorization, even before mining can take place if the deposit is found in mountainous regions? In the case of metallic minerals, the forests are removed and later when the ores are being taken out, tillings are deposited in valleys and in farther streams. In the valleys, these tillings are carried downstream and deposited there, causing the destruction of agricultural areas. Where are these tillings deposited?

BERNADETTE SAN JUAN : Binigyan po ninyo kami ng vision ng DENR, iyung sabi niyo po mayroon tayong current loans na \$240 million para sa reforestation to be spent in three to five years. Sinabi niyo rin po na ang forest charges natin is P30 per cubic meter. This will amount to P3,000 per hectare as forest charges. Pero ang data ko po ay we're spending P15,000 to P35,000 per hectare for reforestation. Bakit po kailangang humiram tayo ng \$240 million para gastusin po sa reforestation? Ang nakukuha lang po natin per hectare is P3,000 at ang ginagasta natin is P15,000 to P35,000, depending on slope and crop-planting.

DR. OFRENEO: Iyung pangangailangang ireporma ang pagmamaneho at paggamit ng ating natural resources ay kasing-igting ng reporma sa pribadong lupa dito sa ating bayan. Unang-una, iyung pagmamay-ari ng natural resources, forest lands, pasture lands, mining lands, at saka iyung mga aqua resources na iyan. Public ang character ng ownership, pero sa paggamit naman, private ang character ng exploitation, private din ang appropriation ng mga tubo. Ang mga lupain na iyan ay itanim pa ng nagdaang taon and it's true that, ang umaani ay ilan lamang. Ikalawa, in the case of the natural resources, kitang-kita natin iyung colonial character ng ekonomiya. But in fact, noong i-develop tayo ng America, noong bago magkagiyera, talagang ito ang pinagtuunan nila ng pansin. Ikalto, doon sa may-ari, napakarami ang problema sa mga ancestral and occupancy rights ng mga cultural communities at saka palagay ko, milyon na ang upland farmers. And then, of course, iyung mga ecological issues, iyung deforestation, depletion, some of the minerals na kinukuha natin ay dini-disembowel ang lupa sapagka't hindi na babalik ang mga minerals na iyan. Incidentally, nagtataka ako kung bakit iyung forest lands, are still being called or classified as forest lands, when in fact, hindi na sila talagang forest lands. Ang mga ito ay nakalbo na at palagay ko medyo malabo na talagang bumalik sa dating anyo o hugis ang forest. In fact, batay doon sa mga satellite sensing, lumalabas na sa 50% na sinabi ni Sec. Factoran na forest land, palagay ko 1/4 o 1/5 ang may forest cover. Nasabi ni Sec. Factoran ang isang proyekto nila na ibaba ang bilang ng mga may hawak ng TLAs, pero, hindi niya nabanggit iyung mga may hawak ng mga pasture-lease agreements (PLAs). Noong bago magpalit ng administrasyon ay mayroong isang milyong ektarya ng pasture lands na hawak lang ng ilang pasture-lease holders. Karamihan sa mga pasture-lease holders were actually land speculators, iyung iba naman ay talagang nagsasamantala dito sa mga pasture lands. Let's take the case of the Yulo-King ranch. Sa isang pirma ni Pres, Marcos, ibinigay sa isang kompanya, King ranch of Australia, business subsidiary of King ranch of Texas ang 40,000 hectares noong 1975. Normally, ang size ng pasture lease ay mga 1000 to 3000 hectares. Ang ginagawa ng ibang mayayaman diyan, mag-aapply silang magkakapatid, mga anak ng tig-1000 hectares sila so puwede ng magkaroon ng ranch na 11,000 hectares. There was a time na ridiculous yata ang presyo ng pasture, P1.50 lang yata ang isang ektarya. Itong mga pasture lands na ito ay batay sa Commission on Land Problems under the Department of Justice. Karamihan diyan ay mayroong mga tao, at iyung iba ay mga cultural minorities and they're competing with the animals or the livestock of the ranchers with regard to the use of the land. Siguro, isang magandang magagawa dito ng DENR ay i-publish nila kung sino iyung mga malalaking pasture lease holders, iyung mga senators, congressmen, governors, mayors, etc.

And then, isa pang issue rito, of course, itong agrarian reform and forest lands doon sa Cordillera. Ang biggest landlord, sabi nila ay ang gobyerno, and I think, pag sinabi ninyong gobyerno, ang tinutukoy nila ay DENR at doon sa Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program of CARP ni Pres. Aquino. Nakalagay kasi doon kapag 18% and above, exempted sa land reform coverage kasi by definition, pag 18% and above, iyan ang forest land. Ito ay isang problema sapagka't ang totoo, wala tayong census, iyung actual na bilang ng mga hillside o upland farmers. So, ano talaga ang direksiyon ng reporma dito? Ang sinasabi ng Constitution natin ay maganda tungkol sa ecological balance, quality of life, social equity and rural development. Pero napakahirap yatang ibalanse lahat ng ito sa lalong madaling panahon at ang isang lumalabas ngayon dito ay iyung isang approach na pinapaboran ng DENR, halimbawa sa reforestation sapagka't, sinabi ni Sec. Factoran, medyo inefficient ang gobyerno. So we rely on the private sector.

Now, in the case of the reforestation program, mukhang they're increasingly relying on the plantation approach, which means ang magre-forest ay iyung mga agribusiness corporations or logging or timber corporations. Paano naman ang issue ng social equity, ang issue ng rights sa lupa? Nabanggit din ni Sec. Factoran iyung tungkol sa paghihiram ng pera sa Hapon o OECF at saka sa ADB na medyo concessional rates, but actually, at the rate the Japanese yen is appreciating, Japanese loans will be the most expensive for the Philippines. In fact, iyung appreciation ng ating foreign debt in 1986 to 1987, nag-increase ng more than 2 billion, mainly because of the appreciation of the yen. So, kahit zero ang interest ng Japanese loans, kung magpapatuloy itong trend na ito, napaka-expensive pa rin ng Japanese loans. Isa pa, sana tilingnan din ng DENR iyung nangyayari sa pino- propagate ngayon ng Department of Agriculture, iyung prawn- farming all over the country. In the case of Negros Occidental, mayroong indications doon na nag-dry off na ang mga natural springs because iyung water tub doon sa ibaba ay hinihigop yung tubig sa mga springs. It seems that Negros Occidental, after this sugar crisis, moving towards an ecological crisis. Doon naman sa mining, I have visited a number of mining sites at nakita ko itong isang method ng mining, iyung tinatawag na open-pit mining na talaga namang napaka-destructive. At you'll be horrified at the way they are disemboweling the earth and I think, dapat ipagbawal ito sapagka't ito ay nakakasira sa kalikasan.

PROF. LYNCH: First, I'd like to say that Sec. Factoran is a welcome change from the policy-makers of the past. He has a disarming way about issues pertaining to power and speaking about the limitations which power, particularly political power is exercised in this country, limits his actions. He's certainly much more open than his predecessors and I suspect that deep down, he's probably even sympathetic to a lot of us who meddle him in issues pertaining to the millions of Filipino citizens, living in the so-called public domain.

Perhaps, it would be helpful first if I sketch an overview of the natural resources sector which Sec. Factoran did not yet present, and that would be an overview as seen from the little people's perspective.

We estimate that today, over 30% of the Philippine population resides in the so-called public domain. Of these, you might come up with a reasonable estimate that over 6 million have been there since World War II and we can call these people indigenous. An additional 2 million have been there for more than 30 years and that has a legal significance. So, we're dealing with 18 million people in forest zone, which pursuant to the social forestry program of the government today, have reclined less than 199,000 hectares covered by the stewardship of agreement. We are also dealing with 154 timber licenses covering over 5 million hectares of tenurial rice. I would suggest that nowhere does the oligarchic iceberg of the Philippines appear more clearly than in the statistics which I have just presented.

We are, as Prof. Ofreneo has suggested clearly, still confined to a colonial framework which is designed to empower and enrich a select and favored few and to disenfranchise and marginalize millions more. Why do I say that? First of all, the government officially estimates that as of the 1986 Philippine forestry statistics, only 1.3 million people live in the public domain. Mr. Secretary, I would like to call your attention to the fact that when the 1987 statistics came out, even that ministerial figure was deleted and this year, they don't have any estimate at all. So we can assume that the DENR is officially estimating now that no one lives in the public domain. They disappeared. They're invisible people. Now, once, we do count them, they're all squatters. Hindi bale kung lupa ng panginoon nila basta kung mula't sapul, tumitira sila doon ay squatter sila. So, they're all squatters. Not only that, they're all kaingineros and we all know about kaingineros. They wake up in the morning and say, "oh, there's another tree I can cut down, I hate trees." Sort of ridiculous imagery, but my friends, I impress upon you the seriousness of it insofar as policy is concerned.

Recently, Sec. Factoran and I had a conference on developing strategy, profile diversity and conservation in the Philippines. I don't know, if Sec. Factoran perceived these recommendations. One is on ancestral domain, and one of the reasons for that was the map that they provided showing the remaining forest areas and the ancestral domains in the Philippines. Any of you who will have the chance to go to the Cordillera or perhaps, Southern Mindoro or other parts of Mindanao and anywhere in ancestral domain, will see that these people oftentimes have indigenous conservation ethics; preserving the forest is an important value to them and obviously, if they destroy the forest, they destroy the hope and the future of their children. We know that under the existing framework, the forests of the Philippines are rapidly depleting under the concessionaire system which was set in place first by the Spaniards, deepened and entrenched by the Americans and still in place today. We are losing the forest. The best conservers of the forest are those populations that have been there for a long time. You only need a pair of good eyes, you don't need to go to the UP College of Forestry in Los Banos to see that the forests in ancestral domains are indeed extraordinary. Yet, these people are among the invisible Filipinos. Many of them find themselves right in the middle of the timber concessions.



S.I. Oct. 22, 1988

Last year, I visited the Banwaon community in Agusan del Sur where no migrants live in the Banwaon ancestral domain. But there are large timber concessions. Some of the beautiful big trees I have ever seen are there in large measure because the Banwaon protected those trees. Now, they find themselves in a terrible situation, fraught with violence as the concessioners cut the trees down. The people are not pleased about it. The NPA has come in, the tension is there, death threats are made, and people have been displaced. When you visit communities like the Banwaon, the people would say, "talagang parang hayop kami. Nasaan ba kami sa gobyernong ito?"

I'm a lawyer, so from a legal perspective, let me share with you that this system whereby, unless you get a document from the state, it is regardless of the length of occupancy, is not pursuant to Philippine indigenous values. It is a colonial process and many of you might understand that it's very difficult for people in the rural areas in the Philippines. These are probably the least westernized sector of society and have the least access to political influence. Part of the problem, of course, emanates from the system of classification which was pointed out by Professors Ofreneo and Bailen. Unless the government certifies the land as alienable and disposable, private rights cannot be touched and therefore, most of the 18 million people living on half of Philippine land classified as public under the existing framework have no hope of securing recognition of their ownership of the land. Under martial law, this situation worsened, and they dare say that not one decree or provision therein which adversely impose on the resource rights of the whirlpool has yet to be repealed. So, when you're talking of resource rights for the poor in the public domain, martial law lives. I refer particularly to three laws for those of you who might be interested in some concrete specifics. First would be PD 410 which was passed by Pres. Marcos in 1974. It provided that, so-called ethnic minorities in 27 provinces will be given 10 years to secure recognition by way of documentation of their rights to their ancestral domains because if they fail to do so, they would lose their rights and the land will be awarded to other deserving applicants. Well, March 11, 1984 came right on the dot 10 years later and not one person in a community was able to secure their rights. So, that threat hangs now over the heads of indigenes in 27 provinces. We have PD 705 which is on the notorious 18% slope. This PD was obviously a gimmick by Pres. Marcos and his cronies to enhance their access to the resource base in the forest zone. It provides that all land above 18% slope is not subject to private ownership and that anybody living on that land will no longer be able to secure recognition from the government. Why 18% slope? My best guess is that 8-1=7 and that would be Pres. Marcos' lucky number. That law has also not been repealed and that is a very difficult burden for those of us struggling to empower the whirlpool insofar as their rights are concerned. The last law is PD 1559 which is an amendment to the revised Forest Code. I call it the adjustment amendment. It empowers the director of forestry to eject anybody within the so-called public forest zone whenever the director deems it the best land use. So, these 18 million people, except for the lucky few who have acquired the stewardship agreement, are disenfranchised. They have no hope of securing rights to the resource base.

Let me say something good about colonial law. For all the terrible things, we, in the United States did to the American Indians, we never call them squatters. It is shocking to me that the Republic of the Philippines continues to make this claim indigenous today. But what is even more surprising, is that in 1909, a case reached the US Supreme Court and no less than Justice Holmes was involved in the problem of an indigenous family in the province of Benguet which is now Camp John Hay Military Reservation. They applied for recognition of their ownership through the Land Registration Act of 1902 but was opposed by the colonial regime. The case finally found its way to the US Supreme Court, which ruled that in the Philippines, whenever you have occupied your land since time immemorial, it will be presumed that it never had been public land. Holmes, furthermore, said that the due process and just compensation procedures in the Organic Act 1916 in the constitution of 1935, 1973, and 1987 Constitutions are further deepened by the decision of Philippine Supreme Court in 1986 which also recognized that ancestral domains are private. How does the executive branch respond to this jurisprudence which is just as good jurisprudence as those 3 unconstitutional laws of Pres. Marcos? Therefore, after eight years of research on Philippine land law, I think, it would be safe to conclude that the laws good for little people and poor people are ignored. But we are very concerned that the laws that are good for the rich and powerful be implemented. The implications of the Carino and the Acme decision are these: that many of the 154 timber licenses, the 154, were unconstitutionally and therefore illegally issued by the government, yet both people living on those lands are owners. They already own it. Their rights must be recognized by the government, if the government is going to pursue a constitutional paradigm. Sec. Factoran has indicated this afternoon that insofar as the issues of empowerment of the whirlpool and tenure claim on the public domain are concerned, some things are now being done. There's some concern when Sec. Factoran says, "my term is too short to do anything substantive on the issue of ancestral domain rights". I would like to ask, what sorts of pressure are you under? What is preventing you from taking steps to not only promote equity in

the rural area but also to protect your remaining forest cover? Obviously, the status quo which the foresters try so hard to preserve because presumably it's profitable to them. So, what prevents you from more substantive and immediate action on behalf of the potentials of the indigenes in the forest zone, in order to contribute to conservation and recognition of the ancestral domain right?

In closing, I will simply say that if we're going to move to community-based forest management, I really don't think we can expect these people to be protecting these trees and continue to call them squatters.

SEC. FACTORAN: When I said that my term is too short to do anything substantial, on behalf of the ancestral domain concept and the indigenes themselves, I was referring not to any particular artificial pressure that is being applied to us by any force outside the bureaucracy, but to the social context in which we move. I do subscribe to the principle that if somebody has lived in a particular area since time immemorial long before the Spaniards came, for example, through a succession of descendants; if they have been living in a particular area, like the Igorots, the Kankanaeys, the Ibalois in Baguio and the Spanish have not been able to conquer them, there is absolutely no legal reason why the Regalian doctrine, which is the greatest weight bearing upon the indigenous communities, could be made to apply to them. There is neither legal law nor moral reason to say that the Spanish concept of law should cover the indigenous tribal communities or at least some parts of them. However, there is nothing automatic in what has to be done thereafter. We still have in fact a contribution which considers the Regalian doctrine as the applicable doctrine.

We, in the government are sworn to uphold the constitution. There are laws passed by the President before, now Congress, which have to be complied with if we are to be true to our oath of office and there is absolutely no freedom on the part of the bureaucrat. So that even if the Supreme Court now says that the Regalian doctrine is ridiculous, it should not apply to Muslims, indigenous communities like the Tasadays, the Ibalois and the Mangyans. My own feeling about ancestral domain, however, is that, the Constitution has made a very big step. It has mandated that the State shall protect the rights of tribal minorities or communities to ancestral domain. We, in the government, therefore, should start taking affirmative action in order to make that protection a reality. We in the DENR will start mapping now and delineating claims of the indigenous cultural communities because even if it takes 10 or 20 years before the society as a whole accepts the concept of rights over the land as being private rights, at least, we would know from now on, what the claim actually is. Kung hindi natin ito gagawin, darating ngayon ang mga Kristiyano at tatakutin nila ang mga tribal communities kaya mapipilitan silang umalis doon sa lugar nila. Sooner or later, there will be no more trees except in some folklore. The fact is, even now, kapag tanungin mo iyung mga tribal communities, ituturo nila iyung dating sa kanila at ang mga Kristiyano naman ay natatawa because it has been quite sometime that the tribal communities have not been there kasi matagal na silang naitaboy, matagal nang napahirapan. I was not referring to any particular vested interest, I was referring instead to the greed of Philippine society as a whole. I heard how well the UP students accepted Prof. Lynch's motions about these. Can you imagine what kind of resistance you will get if you tell a resident of Baguio that the land on which their home stands has been owned by the Igorots since time immemorial? Whether you like it or not, the greedy Christians rather than the oppressed tribal minorities are the majority and when you talk of political power in the Philippines, you still have to talk of the majority. My own personal philosophy especially in terms of something as big as this is to do it slowly. It could be two steps forward and one step backward because it should be dependent upon the political maturity of our society. That's why I'm saying that the three years will really be very short to do anything substantial.

Balik tayo sa unang tanong, iyung tungkol sa decision-making. Dito sa gobyerno, we are given a set of laws. We are more or less left to our own devices. If we need advice as to policy thrusts, we go ask the president and then she tells us what she feels. If we make a policy statement, and the president feels uncomfortable with it, she calls you and tells you why and then you could either change it or persuade her. Part of our freedom in this respect is that we have made it clear to everyone concerned that we're not running for office. Insofar as that is concerned, there is no open, visible, patterned pressure being exerted on us for any decision. Kaya lang, siyempre, mayroong mga taong makikiusap at kung more or less alam mong kayang pahirapan ang programa mo in the future, you take the request in a different light from a different style. That is an informal pressure, kasi wala namang magsasabing "kapag hindi mo ginawa, tapos ka". Kung ang lalapit sa iyo ay wala namang magagawa sa iyo, kahit hindi mo pagbigyan, iba rin ang trato mo sa request nila; iyan ang invisible pressures. But insofar as decision-making in bureaucracy is concerned, under this Presidency, talagang maluwag, it's open. Kaya any mistake that we make is ours really, with nobody to blame. The President is hardly to blame on what we do. As a matter of fact, kapag Presidente na ang magbigay ng policy on any particular item, she makes sure that the cabinet member is consulted. So, in this regard, puwede na, walang takutan kagaya noong araw. I

think the president has moral leadership over all, kaya all you have to do is comply with the president's wishes.

There are 2 questions regarding reforestation: how clearly would it approximate the original? Will it ever be the same again? The way we conceptualize reforestation, considering that we have 6 million hectares of denuded forest lands, is not to bring back the original right away. Kasi, if we expect people to plant Narra and wait for 80 or 100 years before they harvest it, I don't think anybody will plant. So, what we are trying to do is to allow them to plant anything at all that will keep the soil from eroding. So, if this is the case, we will not insist on the terocarp like the Lawaan or Almasiga or whatever. As a matter of fact, payag na kami ngayon kahit Mangga o Langka, kahit Munggo, kahit Falcatta. Kahit na anong itanim basta hindi lang magalaw iyung lupa, sapagka't kung hindi mo tinaniman, nasisira ito, bumabalik sa ilog at nagiging bato, pati iyung ilog bumababaw. Kaya pakiramdam namin, dapat na luwagan iyan. Noong araw, galit na galit iyung mga nasa forestry, kung Mangga daw, agriculture, kung Narra, forestry. We're trying to protect the land, so that's also with our mandate, whatever you plant is fine. But there is absolutely no pretense that it would ever approximate the original state of our forests that's past. All that is gone. I do not know what God will provide for us in the future but whatever it is, at least, what we hope to do is help God by trying to plant, whatever can be planted now. Should things improve and we have less denuded lands, we have extra money to plant, then we can insist that 10% now be reserved for the terocarp, hoping that nature will repair itself, hoping that the species that have been lost because of overcutting can be repaired by nature. But there is absolutely no guarantee with that. No, it will not approximate the original nor was it intended to. What we really want is to give the ecology breathing room. Again, in the three or four years that we're there, it will not be quite long enough to see any substantial things.

Mining is indeed destructive, any mining, open-pit, panelling, etc. because it removes resource away from the bowel of the earth, crushes it, takes the good base and throws away the rest. Open-pit mining looks more destructive. Now the question of whether or not we shall continue with it is really an economic question. If it were all up to me as the department secretary, I would be very glad to keep all the ore on the ground because that would mean less problems for the environment. On the other hand, you will recall that some 10 years ago, 15 years ago, copper prices were very high, and after these years, it went down. Now, copper prices are peaking up again. So, there is no guarantee that the valuable ore you leave on the ground will be valuable still 10 years from now. So, you might be wasting resources that could otherwise provide food for the poorest of the poor. But again, that is not something that can be decided upon by a government, by a department or by even a ruling party. That is really a decision that has to be made by the society at large. So if people strongly feel about environment, do not go for mining. Better emulate the people of Bukidnon, establish people power pickets around the mining companies. But until that time, mining will have to go on because it's very profitable.

Now why borrow for reforestation at P30 per cubic meter, when we cannot even hope to pay for it? The trees are being planted not so much because of the wood, but because of the benefit they give to the entire environment. It contributes to the fertility of the soil, it holds rainwater, and releases it during summer in order to deirrigate the agricultural crops, etc. That is the thing that we want to achieve. Chances are, it will be more expensive in the future and perhaps this concessional loan might prove to be very expensive after all. The only difficulty is that there is no other source. There is absolutely no other money that we have access to for the purpose of planting. And the kind of money that we are getting, the \$240 to \$250 million that we are borrowing, is not even enough to reforest the land. But if 60 million Filipinos start to replant 6 million hectares of denuded forest lands, it can be done. So, what we hope to do is get people interested in reforestation, in ecology, get them to plant with their own resources.

Mr. Ofreno mentioned about the colonial character of the economy. I do understand it and I do feel very strongly about it. Most of the people who make and implement policy, and most of the people who have nothing to eat are not happy. But there is very little that they can do because of the political system that we have. In any case, definitely, reform is needed in the natural resources sector, and in the areas of public land and private utilization. But we can not do it overnight because of the culture that has seeped in, because of the years of neglect of the poor, especially of 16 million upland farmers. There is actually no recognition of the existence of upland farmers. They had to be contented with the leavings of the TLA holders, watching as the logging trucks pass by while they had to cut down something for their firewood. All of these years of neglect are now taking their toll.

Mayroon kaming malaking reforestation sa Nueva Ecija, binabayaran namin ang mga tao araw-araw para magtanim. Ang budget tumagal ng two months pero hindi nabayaran iyung mga taong nagtanim dahil naokasabit-sabit ang budget. Ang ginawa ng mga tao, sinunog ang mga tanim nila. That's a very



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classic case na iyung galit sa gobyerno, iyung galit sa budget, o galit siguro sa amin ay ibinuga sa mga tanim. Ngayon, bakit ko binabanggit ang mga ito? Dahil mas pervasive ito. All these spot satellite maps that we have will show you the extent of kaingin. It is said that there are only two things that can be seen very clearly from the moon: the Great Wall of China and the kaingin. The kaingin areas are so many, so extensive. Nainis na siguro iyung mga tao dahil kahit anong pag-aalaga nila sa gubat, hindi naman sa kanila napupunta. Alaga sila ng alaga, walis sila ng walis, pausok sila ng pausok, bukas, makalawa, may darating na businessman o logger at paaalisin sila. Tanggalin mong lahat ang TLA, ipalit natin ang magsasaka but there is no guarantee that the farmers will be respected.

We have in fact, pilot areas of community of baranganic logging. One is in Abuyong, Negros. Doon, mayroon ng community TLA, may community logging at sila na ang namamahala, ang nagtatanim doon, at nangunguha ng prutas. Kapag kailangang magputol ng kahoy, sila ang magbebenta nito. After two or three years, mayroon na namang elite na puro magsasaka. After three or four years, there were about five leaders, capitalists already dealing with Chinese traders. Protektado iyan dahil it was a pilot area. They're not to be blamed. It is government's fault, if anything at all, for long years of neglect. But the fact is, it is here. So, there is absolute danger in just leaving it unprotected and allowing the community to go in and protect it or do the logging themselves. So, even if we wanted to get the 150 TLAs right away, we cannot. But right now, we have only 103. We promise you that by 1992, there will only be 50. There will be more and more community TLAs.

At the same time, there is a bill in Congress saying, ban logging for 25 years. Our feeling is that it is a dangerous move to make, considering that we still have some social orientation, attitude engineering activities to do. Sa Negros din, may isang maliit na maliit na TLA sa isang magaling na forester, pero it was, the best TLA in the land. Ang ganda ng reforestation, ang ganda ng suweldo ng tao. Noong minsang dumaan si Imelda, hindi doon sa area niya, doon sa kabilang lugar, nakitang maraming kalbo, sabi niya, "bakit maraming kalbo rito?" "Dahil ho sa TLA." Pagbalik sa Maynila, kinansel lahat ang TLAs. Kinansel pati iyung forester na magaling. Umiyak iyung matanda. Iyung pinagpaguran niya ng 17 years, in two years ubos, kasi walang nagbabantay, kaya pumasok ang mga tao at kanya-kanyang putol sila.

If we leave our forests unprotected, we could suddenly turn around and say, our policy was wrong, there is nothing we can do about it anymore. So, we are taking the side of caution. Natatakot kami, hindi naman sigurado kung ano, so in the meantime, the TLA holders, no matter how bad these were before, they are useful now for forest protection. Because we have set the policy of stability in the industry of wood, hindi sila natatakot na baka bukas maaalis sila. Iyung mga TLA holders, hindi putol ng putol iyan ngayon, medyo takot na sila. Unti-unti, nagre-reforest, sumusubok gumawa ng mabuti sapagka't alam nila kapag nagkamali sila, tapos ang maliligayang araw nila. In the meantime, sila na rin ang pomuprotekta sa forest, something that we cannot do in the department because we don't have the resources.

The pasture land is still a big pain in the neck because pasture lease is really the most inefficient way of using land. They give large tracks of land, tapos magpapalabas lang ng mga baka, so we're trying to cut back on that. The policy not to issue any PLA and to try to cancel as many as we can. There are many pasture lands being planted to coffee, mangoes, etc. We expect to minimize the areas that are to be given PLAs. The Yulo-King ranch, is still under sequestration or asset privatization, so we cannot touch it.

It's true that prawn-farming is bad for the environment. It causes the destruction of mangrove in forests. Mangrove is very important because it is where the fish and other seafood can thrive. But because of the large amounts of money being made in prawn-farms, you'd seem to be pushing back the waves when you try to discourage prawn-farming. I was in Negros and I was giving a speech about how bad it is to convert mangroves to prawn farms. It was met really by strong silence because everybody was supplying the Japanese with prawns and, thus, was making good money. I don't know where the money goes, but the fact is, people are making money on prawns. But we are not giving away anything more. Kaya lang ang damping areas na punung-puno ng prawns, pati iyung mga tubig doon sa deep well naapektuhan na nito. But it's a bad situation. I'm sorry, there's nothing much I can do about prawn-farming, especially after we have released the land. But now, we don't intend to release more.

Mr. Lynch said that the indigenous cultural communities are very conscious about the environment. I think, it can be the breakthrough in the protection of the forest after we learn what lessons they had known for ages. But the fact is that if you give forest lands now, to the tribal minorities, I don't think they can protect it themselves. They can't even protect the land that they till. There's just too little of them. They are not empowered. They don't have much guns and the lowlanders, the Christians are too greedy, too powerful. So, our own concept right now, is instead of making it open to private ownership right away, the uplands will still be considered forest lands and will be given to the tribal communities. Their claims on the ancestral domain, mapped out and delineated, are waiting for further action by Congress on the tribal council that they will come up with. But in the meantime, we give inputs to the indigenous cultural communities so they can plant crops. They can cut down trees that they don't need to use for their own housing requirements or even sell some of them. But I don't think it would be productive at this point to make it openly private, especially if such privatization would mean the right to sell. Whether or not it will be proper for us in government now to give, even if the ancestral domain rights were already considered, acknowledged and approved and whether or not the indigenes should have the right to sell is a continuing debate. My belief is if they allow the right to sell, they might soon be dispossessed again.

The 18% slope, notwithstanding the arithmetical magic of Owen here is really not because $8-1=7$. Eighteen percent slope is really a technical, a scientifically defended distinction. I don't know whether the justification came before or after 18% but the fact is some scientists in Los Banos swear that 18% is a good distinction because that is the last protection of the forest. Now, it's true that when you classify land as forest land, it doesn't mean that there are trees there. We still do not know in government what the ideal ratio is between agriculture lands and forest lands. Now, because of ignorance, you cannot afford to release forest lands into alienable and disposable because once you do that, it will be permanent. So, while there is no clear understanding yet as to what the ratio should be, nire-reserba ang forest lands, so that, kung yumaman, kung lumakas ang political will, kung maging environmentally conscious ang mga tao, may lugar para mapagtataniman ng puno. Ngayon, kung ito ay gagawin mo ng alienable and disposable, ibibigay mo na sa mga tao, hindi mo na makukuha iyun. Maybe instead of forest land on top of the mountain, we may find a golf course. Ganoon ang nangyari sa Cebu, golf course ang nasa itaas. Wala nang magagawa ang gobyerno, kahit anong sama ng loob mo, kahit kailangan mo pang taniman iyan, andoon na iyun. You have to respect your investment, there's plenty of dollars there. So instead of being put in a position where we have to do something drastic like nationalize a piece of land and therefore incur the American Chamber of Commerce's wrath, we have decided no matter how artificial, in favor of this classification which is still useful as a hedge against a future of environmental degradation. Iyan ho ang position ko ngayon on 18%.

Q: I'm MC Barrameda of the Department of Anthropology. I have a series of questions here. First, you seem to be emphasizing that now that you are in power, you cannot do anything, you are helpless. I remember very well, in this same covered hall that you were a fighter when you were a human rights lawyer in MABINI. You were all on fire for the human rights of the people. And now, all of a sudden, that you are occupying a place of honor, you seem to be very helpless. Why is this? We in the academe are doing research for our own purposes, but we cannot help but be aware of what is actually happening. Now, may I bring up some of the very glaring facts which I think the policy-making body is not aware of Owen Lynch mentioned Banwaon, which was also my research area. Right after the EDSA revolution, we convened the National Ancestral Land Congress in Cebu, the Anthropological Association of the Philippines, UGAT, together with the University of San Carlos. The purpose was to impress on the minds of policy-makers that indigenous people are not helpless. They have gone to a higher level of organizing, of politicization and they are asserting themselves. So, one of the things that they brought forward was, the President's awarding a 3,000-hectare land to the wrong tribe. And so, since the department was very slow in taking action, they took the law into their hands. There is fighting now. They killed the fake datu. So, if you always say that your timetable is only until 1990, it might be too late.

Another question is about reforestation. The people in Banwaon resented very much those corporations who are planting *Falcatta* for their own purposes. Monoculture, like the *Falcatta* plantation, is very detrimental to ecology.

Then, regarding the census, those of us doing research go to the Bureau of Census and we are told that the Banwaons are not counted because they are very few. It's very surprising then, we always say, that they are very few and yet the resources that they have are the ones people are interested in. So, we did our own counting. They are not few. Well, in that Ancestral Land Congress, we came up with an Executive Order which, of course, Cory Aquino endorsed to Congress. But until now, it is shelved. We did the mapping, the delineation of the ancestral domain, the census, everything, except the survey because that required money. So, this is what we in the academe are doing and I hope, together with the policy-making body, we will do something not just wait and move so slow. Otherwise, we will be overtaken by events.

A: I'm not saying I'm helpless. I'm saying I'm helpless to do the big, big things that you want us to do. It cannot be done right now. But that doesn't mean that we cannot do anything. The fact that we have encouraged the people in Bukidnon to do people power and then to cancel the TLA is power by itself. I am not saying that I, alone, am helpless. I say, government alone is helpless, without the support of the people. And while the political system is such that people will still look up to grandstanders and applauds every time there is an investigation, you can't expect the implementors of the executive department to move fast. You can't. There are thorns and traps along the way. They have to be very careful because without their knowing, their children might see their faces flashed on the papers charged with whatever crime, especially graft. That is the context in which we move now and there is a certain helplessness and frustration that is engendered in us. Perhaps, I was right in saying that during Marcos' time, the ministers were much more powerful than we are now. But it doesn't mean that we don't have power. We have power. We are exercising it to the best of our ability, but we can't do everything at once. And the long

pestering things in your minds, especially in the minds of the academic community are things that are usually deeply rooted already. That is why it came to the attention of the academics. If it were seen as a recent phenomenon, nobody would even mind it. So, how long did the Americans take to finish with the Indian controversy? They haven't even now. And I think it would be difficult to finish this ancestral domain beat during Owen Lynch's stint in the Philippines. I think it is only in keeping with the propriety, honesty and frankness required of a government official to say, to promise only such things as we can promise. As our visions are very clear, there are items that we promise to do by 1992 and all of those things cannot be done without power. And that power, the little that we have, we will exercise for what we think is good. But the bigger things, the bigger items will have to wait a little longer.

I do not know the Banwaon controversy very well right now. I am sorry, but I will look into it whatever we can do to stop the fighting.

On the reforestation and the Falcatta, Falcatta is not really good, it's a lousy species of trees, especially if you compare it to the Majistre Carra. But since we have to have the denuded lands planted fast and the people are interested to plant Falcatta because of the big amount of money that they can get from the Japanese, we allow it for the moment. When we have enough resources to plant other species in the denuded forest lands, we will, I assure you, stop the planting of the Falcatta. It's not good, except in forest areas. Falcatta is also good, like Ipil-Ipil to serve as the fuel means of upland farmers. They will have to have provision for that. But large-scale plantations of Falcatta are undesirable from the ecological point of view, but for the moment, it is economically feasible and therefore allowed.

Q: There is a lot of excitement about gold-diggings in Mindanao because of the money it has generated. The government is especially excited about it. But I think one of the problems being caused by it is the pollution of the rivers, caused by mercury. How are you addressing this problem, especially in the light of the fact that you want to double the contribution of gold-mining to GNP by 1992?

A: What we've done first is to try to educate the people as to the evil consequences of mercury-poisoning. When we went to Diwalwal in Davao, we saw so many people doing the panning themselves. They crush the ore, they put it in a pan, pinalulutang na ganoon. Bumababa yata iyung gold. Itinatapon ang dirt. They put mercury on the gold, they are amalgamated and then patutuyuin, pinipiga, ilalagay sa lalagyan then ibo-blow torch. Kitang-kita mo iyung mercury na nag-e-evaporate, pumapasok sa lungs, etc. We asked, "Ano ang ginagawa ninyo? You're killing yourself; don't you realize it's so bad?" Tapos, sabi noong mama, "mahirap din hong mamatay ng gutom, at least, ito ho poisoning lang, medyo matagal-tagal." Ewan ko, nagpapatawa yata iyon, pero talagang nakakahindik, tumayo ang balahibo ko. In any case, nagpagawa kami ng komiks, nagpagawa ako ng betamax tapes sa Minamata disease sa Tokyo. Sa Diwalwal, walang simbahan, walang banyo, walang kubeta, walang klinika, walang eskuwelahan pero may betamax shop, may beer garden at massage clinic. Ni-require namin iyung mga tao na bawat turn ng sine doon, ipapalabas din itong Minamata para matakot ang mga tao. Ayaw pa rin, nandoon pa rin, mercurying daw ang pinakamabilis. Gumawa rin kami ng retorch system. Nagpa-design kami ng system where mercury will also be used, but it's 99.9% safe. We were selling it or leasing it at cost to them, telling them how bad it was for them to be using mercury. Walang bumibili, walang nagli-lease, ipinamimigay namin. O sige, kung ayaw ninyo, ito na muna ang sa inyo, saka na namin kayo sisingilin, gamitin na lang muna ninyo itong re-torch system. Ayaw pa rin. Tanong namin, "Bakit ayaw ninyo?" Ang sagot ganito: "Ang tagal ho kasi, iyung 5 minutes, nagiging 30 minutes." Nagmamadaling kumita ng pera ang mga tao. By next year, we intend to do something more drastic: ipagbabawal na namin talaga at huhulihin namin ang gumagamit. Pero alam ninyo, napakahirap manghuli ng mga taong nagtatrabaho para sa kakainin nila. It's very counter-productive: hulihin mo sila, ipasok mo, pero may maiwan na gagamit uli. We don't have enough jails. So, what we intend to do now is establish cyanide plants near the area. Iyung cyanide plant, mahal iyon kaya hindi naman puwede. But we've established two already to make the service available to them. Merong pumupunta, iyung mga natatakot na siguro, pero mayroon pa ring ayaw.

Q: Ako ay si Marvic Leonen, galing sa UP College of Law. Naintriga po ako sa sinabi ninyo tungkol sa buwan na nakikita lang iyung Great Wall of China at saka iyung mga kaingin. Kasi, baka ito 'yung nagiging problema natin, nakatali tayo sa isang pananaw, sa isang mind set. Gusto lang nating makita iyung gusto natin. Halimbawa, baka ho naman, galing sa buwan, makikita natin ang kalawakan ng dagat o ang kagandahan ng mga iba't ibang bituin. Ang isang magandang halimbawa ay iyung sinabi ninyo tungkol sa residente ng Baguio. Hindi ninyo naitatanong, isa rin akong residente ng Baguio tapos sinabi ninyo na medyo masakit at mahirap sabihin sa isang residente ng Baguio na baka hindi kanya iyong lupa na kinatitirikan ng bahay niya. Bakit hindi ho natin tingnan ang kalagayan ng mga katutubo natin sa

kabundukan? Iyun ho ang sinasabi natin actually sa kanila, hindi kanila iyung lupang tinitirhan nila, mula pa noong hindi na nila matandaan. Bukod doon, noong estudyante pa ako sa College of Law, napanood ko kayo sa ilang human rights trials. Ang sabi ko sa aking sarili, the mark of a genuine leader is not that he accomplishes something but that he motivates other people to accomplish something. Ngayon ho nasa isang mahalagang posisyon kayo sa pamahalaan, tapos hindi ko ho yata matanggap ang sinasabi ninyo na hindi kayo puwedeng mag-advocate. Bakit ho hindi kayo mag-umpisa ng isang advocacy tungkol sa mga naninirahan sa kabundukan. Iparating ninyo na ipaglalaban ninyo ito kahit alam ninyo na hanggang tatlong taon lang kayo.

A: Doon sa kaingin, nagbibiro lang ako nang sinabi kong nakikita sa buwan, nakikita lang po sa satellite. Ngayon, iyung sa Baguio, ewan ko kung ano ang punto mo roon. Sa aking palagay, wala akong lupa sa Baguio, kaya walang hassle sa akin iyan. Pero isipin mo, kung gagawa ako ng ruling, paaalisin ko iyung mga tao doon sa Baguio o kaya i-open ko lahat to question iyung mga tiles ng mga tao sa Baguio. Whether you like it or not, since time immemorial up to the American time, all of that was Ifugao country. If we ask Prof. Lynch, I think he will say, Ibaloi. Now, if it's overtly Ibaloi, can you imagine what it will do to other people? I'm not saying that there is a lack of fervor in my heart for the tribal minorities but what I want to do is permanent good. Uunti-untilin na lang namin. We will do our best.

Q: Ako po ay isang guro sa Departamento ng Heograpiya dito sa UP. Gaya po ng sinabi ninyo kanina, dinala ko po ang aking mga mag-aaral doon sa Karanglan, Nueva Ecija noong summer. Salamat po sa mga facilities ng inyong departamento at kami po ay nanirahan doon sa training center sa Karanglan. Ngayon, sa aming pag-aaral, nakita po namin na hindi lang iyung pagkaka-delay ng budget ang cause noong forest fire. Isa pa pong dahilan ay iyung pagkawala ng trabaho ng mga tao. Itong proyektong ito ay JICA funded. Ang mga Hapon ay nagbibigay na ng monetary aid mula pa noong 1978. Pero sa pakikipag-usap ko sa mga Hapon, hindi nila masabi after 10 years, kung complete at successful iyung kanilang project. Isa na pong reason iyung sinabi ko kanina na forest fires. Siguro, ang root cause noon ay poverty, kasi talagang nawalan ang mga tao ng trabaho. Pangalawa pong point ay tungkol doon sa Karanglan. Siguro, na-rereplicate itong situation na ito sa mga ibang reforestation projects, especially foreign-funded reforestation projects. Mayroon po ba tayong control sa uri ng teknolohiya, ng reforestation technology na ibinibigay sa ating mga foresters? Nasabi ko po ito kasi, doon sa Karanglan, sa aming pakikipag-usap sa mga foresters natin na supposedly tine-train ng mga trainors mismo, hindi sila naniwala sa maraming teknolohiya na ibinibigay ng mga Hapones. Bakit po? Kasi doon mismo sa site na iyun, mayroong dalawang soil erosion control demonstrations, iyung isa ginawa noong mga Hapon. Maliit lamang, siguro, less than a hectare of slope hillside at ang cost po noon ay P1 million. Sa tabi po ng demonstration site noong mga Hapon na iyun, gumawa ang mga Filipino foresters ng equivalent demonstration site to arrest soil erosion at a cost of only P35,000 for that same area. Ang point ko po dito, siguro po sa mga foreign-funded loans na iyun na bukod sa high cost, kung susundin po natin ang kanilang teknolohiya baka po magkulang pa ang perang ibinibigay sa atin. Pangatlo pong point na nakita namin, mukhang wala po tayong guidelines sa "site and species suitability classification". Nasabi po ninyo kanina na ang inyong pakay sa inyong departamento is to get people to plant trees no matter what kind of trees. Pero siguro po mas epektibo ang inyong program sa departamento kung mayroon kayong maibigay na guidelines sa ating mga mamamayan as to what kind of species is suitable for which areas. Nababasa natin sa diyaryo ngayon na a lot of private groups are into this. Iyung 50,000 trees have been planted in this site, another hundred thousand trees in here. Marami po sigurong pumapasok na pondo sa mga NGOs. Pero, ilan pong porsiyento ng 50,000 na iyon o hundred thousand na iyon ang buhay next year? Kaya, iyun pong target ninyo na 300,000 hectares sa 1992, kung wala po itong mga supporting sites and species suitability, palagay ko mahihirapan pong maihabol. Dahil ang range po sa aming pag-aaral ng mortality ng mga forest trees sa mga seedlings in the absence of a site and species suitability study, ay between 30% to 70%. So kung nakapag-reforest kayo ng 1,000 hectares ngayong taong ito, ilan lang pong hectares iyan next year? At finally, sa integrated social forestry program, nagbibigay kayo ng stewardship agreement sa mga tao. Sa aming pag-aaral, mukhang kulang tayong sa technology transfer sa mga taong binibigyan natin ng stewardship agreement. Naayon na rin po ito sa aking pakikipag-usap sa inyong mga ISF officers. Kulang po dahil hindi nila alam kung ano ang itatanim at saka kulang po sa marketing.

A: Well, doon sa sites and species suitability studies, sinusubukan talaga namin na padamihin ang kaalaman ng mga tao rito at ito ay maganda, maraming kabutihan ang nangyari sa regionalization, dahil sila ang bahala sa region nila pati na ang mga probinsiya. Nagbibigay naman kami ng guidance pero insofar as we are concerned, especially sa contract reforestation, iba ang kaso ng mga private investors. Kikita sila kung within three years meron silang 90% survival rate. Kung hindi, hindi sila babayaran. Dahil private enterprise ito, aming inaasahan na sila na mismo ang mag-iimbestiga kung anong species ang dapat itanim. Sila na ang magdedesisyon kung ano ang dapat at we expect na hindi naman sila magtatanim doon at magbabakasakali kung hindi nila pag-aaralan muna.

Doon sa foreign technology, tama ka. Pero sa perang hinihiram namin, hindi namin ginagamit iyung foreign technology. Ang mga foreign tech na iyan ay kayabangan ng mga foreigners. Ano pang technology ang mas maganda kaysa sa Banaue Rice Terraces? Ang steep ng bundok, hindi naman nag-erode. Iyung inutang natin, hindi conditionality iyung use of technology and we are not using it very wisely. The only foreign tech that we've been using so far ay iyung sa New Zealand. Maganda iyung rooting system nila, may mga pinuputol sila sa roots. Iyun ay napapakinabangan. At maganda rin iyung nakuha nila sa China. Pero parang sa Banaue Rice Terraces din, nagkakanal-kanal sa bundok. We're allowing the farmers to do their own technology with a little resistance.

Doon sa ISF, talagang kulang na kulang ang mga extension workers kaya kulang na kulang din iyung transfer of technology. If there is technology to transfer and we expect that with the use of the ADB loan, we would be increasing the input in terms of technology. As to the marketing, we're living it up to local governments and peasants and farmers' cooperative within the area.

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