

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 169, June 05, 2014]

**ESTABLISHING EMERGENCY MEASURES TO CONTROL AND
MANAGE THE SPREAD AND DAMAGE OF ASPIDIOTUS RIGIDUS
IN THE PHILIPPINES AND DESIGNATING THE PHILIPPINE
COCONUT AUTHORITY AS THE LEAD AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSE**

WHEREAS, the Philippines is the top supplier of coconut products in the world market contributing an estimated \$2 billion net foreign earnings, providing livelihood to some 3.5 million coconut farmers, and serving as economic backbone in sixty-eight (68) of the eighty (80) provinces of the country;

WHEREAS, an invasive and introduced species of scale insect, *Aspidiotus rigidus*, an insect pest attacking plant leaves, feeding on sap directly drawn from the plant's vascular system, with a distinct characteristic of secreting a waxy coating for defense which resembles fish scales, has been tremendously infesting bearing and non-bearing coconut trees and has devastated a significant number of coconut farms in the CALABARZON Region;

WHEREAS, there are verified reports of scale insect infestation in other island provinces, even in the Mindanao areas, and the pest has been attacking other high-value crops (like coffee, cacao, and mangosteen) that are cultivated under coconuts or near coconut plantations;

WHEREAS, this massive infestation of scale insect poses a very serious threat to the coconut industry and to the livelihood of those who depend thereon;

WHEREAS, the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) is the government agency mandated to oversee the development of the coconut industry in all its aspects and ensure that such development redound to the interests of the coconut farmers;

WHEREAS, the Local Government Units are mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991 to share the responsibility in the management and maintenance of ecological balance within their jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, if the spread of this invasive pest is not contained, it may wipe out the coconut industry not just in CALABARZON but, eventually, in the rest of the country; and

WHEREAS, to ensure the preservation and development of this vital industry, there is a need to put in place immediate and comprehensive measures to effectively control, manage and eventually eradicate the scale insect infestation and to designate the PCA as the lead agency for the purpose.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BENIGNO S. AQUINO III, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order: