

**[ EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 23, February 01, 2011 ]**

**DECLARING A MORATORIUM ON THE CUTTING AND  
HARVESTING OF TIMBER IN THE NATURAL AND RESIDUAL  
FORESTS AND CREATING THE ANTI-ILLEGAL LOGGING TASK  
FORCE**

WHEREAS, the entire country has been a witness to the ever-changing climatic conditions brought about by the La Niña phenomenon;

WHEREAS, the destructive effects of the phenomenon on the environment are apparent in many regions in the country and it is an accepted fact that the effects are worsened due to the continuous denudation of the forest zones;

WHEREAS, the watersheds and the river systems supporting existing or proposed hydroelectric power facilities, irrigation works or existing water facilities are in need of immediate protection and rehabilitation;

WHEREAS, it is the obligation of the State to protect the remaining forest cover areas of the country not only to prevent flash floods and hazardous flooding but also to preserve biodiversity, protect threatened habitats and sanctuaries of endangered and rare species, and allow natural regeneration of residual forests and development of plantation forests;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to arrest the degradation, pollution and contamination of the river and water systems and to stem the wanton destruction of the forest resources;

WHEREAS, Article XII, Sec. 2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitutional provides that "the exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State".

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

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this Executive Order, the following terms shall be defined:

1.1 *Forest Land* - it includes public forest, permanent forest or forest reserves, and forest reservations.

1.2 *Natural and Residual Forests* – are forests composed of indigenous trees, not planted by man.

1.3 *Plantation Forest* – is a forest where the trees were planted pursuant to a management agreement with the DENR.

1.4 *Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA)* – is a production sharing contract entered into by and between the DENR and a qualified

applicant wherein the DENR grants to the latter exclusive right to develop, manage, protect and utilize a specified area of forest land and forest resources therein for a specified period consistent with the principle of sustainable development and in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Development and Management Plan (CDMP).

1.5 *Socialized Integrated Forest Management Agreement (SIFMA)* – is an agreement entered into by and between a natural or juridical person and the DENR wherein the latter grants to the former the right to develop, utilize and manage a small tract of forest land consistent with the principle of sustainable development.

1.6 *Community-Based Forest Management (CBFMA)* – is an agreement entered into by and between the government and the local community in a locality, represented by a people's organization as forest managers, for a specific period wherein the local community is allowed to develop, utilize and manage a small tract of forest land consistent with the principle of sustainable development.

1.7 *National Greening Program* – is a DA-DENR-DAR Convergence Initiative anchored on the government's goal of poverty reduction, food, security, climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Section 2. *Moratorium on the Cutting and Harvesting of Timber in the Natural Forests* – A moratorium on the cutting and harvesting of timber in the natural and residual forests of the entire country is hereby declared unless lifted after the effectivity of this Executive Order. In order to implement this policy, the following are hereby instituted:

2.1 The DENR is henceforth hereby prohibited from issuing logging contracts/agreements in all natural and residual forests, such as Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA), Socialized Integrated Forest Management Agreements (SIFMA), Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) and other agreements/contracts with logging components in natural and residual forests;

2.2 The DENR is likewise prohibited from issuing/renewing tree cutting permits in all natural and residual forests nationwide, except for clearing of road right of way by the DPWH, site preparation for tree plantations, silvicultural treatment and similar activities, provided that all logs derived from the said cutting permits shall be turned over to the DENR for proper disposal. Tree cutting associated with cultural practices pursuant to the indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA Law) may be allowed only subject to strict compliance with existing guidelines of the DENR;

2.3 The DENR shall review/evaluate all existing IFMAs, SIFMAs, CBFMAs and other forestry agreements/contracts and immediately terminate/cancel the agreements of those who have violated the terms and conditions of their contracts/agreements as well as existing forest laws, rules and regulations at least twice. Furthermore, said agreements shall likewise be immediately terminated/cancelled if the holders thereof engage in logging activities in any natural or residual forest or abet the commission of the same;