

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 515, March 15, 2006]

CREATING THE NATIONAL ANTI-ENVIRONMENT CRIME TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE VIOLATIONS AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

WHEREAS, the 1987 Constitution provides that it is a State Policy to “protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature” (Section 16, Article II);

WHEREAS, various elements, groups and individuals continue to undermine environmental laws, rules and regulations resulting in the deterioration of the environment, the destruction of natural resources and even the loss of lives;

WHEREAS, the creation of a National Anti-environment Crime Task Force to strictly enforce environmental laws, as well as to investigate and prosecute violations thereof, is imperative in order to assure our people that their right to a balanced and healthful ecology is prioritized;

WHEREAS, the Administrative Code of 1987 provides that the President has the continuing authority to reorganize the Office of the President and to transfer functions from one department or agency to another;

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree No. (“PD”) 1416, as amended by PD 1772, further empowers the President to create entities, agencies or units of the National Government in order to attain an efficient government machinery;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. Creation of National Anti-Environment Crime Task Force. – There is hereby created a National Anti-environment Crime Task Force (“NAECTAF”) under the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (“PAOCC”) to be headed by the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, who shall be assisted by a Deputy NAECTAF Head. The NAECTAF shall have a Secretariat to be headed by an Executive Director.

The NAECTAF shall be manned by a composite team from the law enforcement and related agencies whose structure and staffing shall be determined by the NAECTAF Head, subject to the approval of the PAOCC, as reorganized.

SECTION 2. Powers and Functions of the NAECTAF. – The NAECTAF shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. In coordination with the Philippine National Police (“PNP”) and other law enforcement agencies, conduct and cause the immediate arrest and investigation of suspects of crime against the environment;
- b. Conduct intelligence and counter-intelligence operations to identify environmental crime suspects and their cohorts;
- c. Refer the case/s at hand, as the NAECTAF may deem proper and necessary, to the Department of Justice and other investigative bodies for proper disposition;
- d. Monitor and follow-up the process of on-going investigation and prosecution of cases which the NAECTAF has taken cognizance of;
- e. Refer to appropriate agencies cases which involve alleged proceeds and gains arising from the crime against the environment for purposes of initiating forfeiture and seizure proceedings;
- f. Call upon any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the Government, including government-owned and/or controlled corporations and local government units to assist in the anti-environmental crime drive for a more resolute prevention, detection and investigation of environmental crimes;
- g. Subject to existing laws grant monetary rewards or incentives to informants giving vital information leading to the successful prosecution of criminal offenders against the environment;
- h. Subject to existing laws, coordinate with the Witness Protection Security and Benefits Program Committee of the Department of Justice to evaluate and assess witnesses who may qualify under the provisions of Republic Act No. 6981, otherwise known as the Witness Protection and Benefit Act;
- i. Develop public awareness and information campaigns, in partnership with local government units and civic organizations, to encourage public participation in the government’s anti-environmental crime effort;
- j. Recommend the issuance of appropriate policies and/or the legislation of laws that would hasten the arrest and prosecution of criminals against the environment;
- k. Undertake research work and maintain a database of information relating to environmental crimes, offenders, modus operandi and other information that may be submitted or culled from the reports of various law enforcement agencies and share with appropriate law enforcement agencies for the purpose of advancing the fight against