

[PROCLAMATION NO. 744, February 20, 1996]

**DECLARING THE RAINFORESTS OF THE PROVINCES OF
NORTHERN SAMAR, EASTERN SAMAR AND WESTERN SAMAR AS
FOREST RESERVE**

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the government to develop, conserve and manage the natural resources of the country on sustainable basis and adopt a policy of maintaining a nationwide program of environmental protection for the benefit and welfare of future generations of Filipinos;

WHEREAS, the three provinces of Samar have suffered and sustained extensive damages to life and property caused by devastating flash floods and landslides;

WHEREAS, the denudation caused by rampant and unabated logging and other exploitative activities have been pinpointed as the causal factor of the catastrophic calamities which resulted in unwarranted loss of human lives and misery to thousand of Samareños, burying their homes, villages and farmlands and destroying roads, bridges and numerous infrastructure projects;

WHEREAS, the people of the three provinces of Samar have petitioned the government to act expeditiously and with resolve in order to preserve, conserve and manage on a sustainable basis the remaining forest cover of Samar, to protect human lives and property, promote environmental and socio-economic security and provide sanctuary and refuge for many endangered flora and fauna such as the Philippine Tarsier, the Philippine Eagle, the Rufus Hornbill, the Bleeding Heart Pigeon and the Philippine Cuckatoo;

NOW THEREFORE, upon recommendation of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Republic of the Philippines, do hereby proclaim the rain forest of the Provinces of Northern Samar, Eastern Samar and Western Samar as forest reserve, subject to existing recognized claims and private rights.

The Samar Forest Reserve, covering an aggregate area of 360,000 hectares, more or less, shall be subject to immediate resource and land use survey and delineation.

Consistent with this Proclamation, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall administer and manage the Samar Forest Reserve in coordination with concerned agencies of the government and other non-government organizations within the locality, and as an initial activity cause the above-mentioned resource and land use survey. It shall likewise initiate the preparation of a framework plan for the protection and management of the Reserve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.