

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 403, February 28, 1997]

ADOPTING A PHILIPPINE TOURISM HIGHWAY PROGRAM TO FURTHER DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE TOURISM POTENTIALS OF THE COUNTRY AND CREATING THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE THEREOF

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State to develop and promote the tourism potentials of the country as part of national development efforts for the furtherance of the empowerment of the Filipino people and continued enhancement of the competitiveness of the Philippine economy;

WHEREAS, the National Tourism Program of the Department of Tourism provides for a focused and sustained approach to develop and promote the tourism areas of the country among domestic and foreign tourists;

WHEREAS, there is a need to establish an integrating mechanism to ensure focused and sustained government efforts to ensure the viability of the tourism areas, in terms of safe, easy and affordable access to domestic and foreign tourists;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

Section 1. *Establishment of the Philippine Tourism Highway Program.* There is hereby adopted a Philippine Tourism Highway Program to serve as an integrating mechanism for the developmental and promotional efforts of government for the tourism areas of the country. It shall cover the national road network where tourism areas are located and which are necessarily the "scenic spot" portion of the tourism highway showcasing the splendor and beauty of the local landscape as well as its tourism attractions. Tourism areas shall include historical and other tourist attractions easily accessible through the tourism highway.

Section 2. *Framework.* The Philippine Tourism Highway Program shall be pursued to link the country's tourism areas and attractions through the national highway system, to the north from Manila to Laoag City via the Cagayan Valley Region and to the south from Manila to Mindanao via the Bicol and Eastern Visayas Regions. This shall promote the development and preservation of the tourism areas, as well as ensure their viability by enhancing their accessibility, safety, and affordability to domestic and foreign tourists.

Section 3. *Presidential Task Force.* There is hereby also created a Presidential Task Force to coordinate the effective implementation of this Order. It shall be chaired by the DOT Secretary with the DPWH Secretary as Vice Chairman and the Secretaries of DILG, DTI, DA, DENR, DOE, DOTC, DND and Heads of the National Historical Institute, National Power Corporation, National Youth Commission, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Travel Agencies