

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 263, July 19, 1995]

ADOPTING COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT AS THE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S FORESTLANDS RESOURCES AND PROVIDING MECHANISMS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution provides for the protection and advancement of the right of the Filipino people, both men and women, to a healthful and balanced ecology;

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 10 provides for the promotion of social justice to all citizens in all phases of national development;

WHEREAS, Article XIV, Section 17 mandates the State to recognize and respect the rights of the indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains and consider their customs, traditions and beliefs in the formulation of laws and policies;

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 192, series of 1987, mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as the primary government agency responsible for the sustainable management and development of the country's natural resources;

WHEREAS, the Philippines 2000 and the government's Social Reform Agenda support people empowerment and the full, meaningful and indispensable participation of communities as immediate stakeholders of the forestlands resources in the protection and management of the forest ecosystem;

WHEREAS, the 25-year Master Plan for Forestry Development also recognizes the indispensable role of local communities in forest protection, rehabilitation, development and management, and targets the protection, rehabilitation, management, and utilization of at least 4 million hectares of forestlands, through the community-based forest management strategy;

WHEREAS, entrusting the responsibility for forest rehabilitation, protection, and conservation to the community of stakeholders and affording them equitable access to the forest and coastal resources are viable forestland management strategies as borne by the experience of the DENR and various supporting agencies;

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

SECTION 1. Community-based forest management (herein referred to as CBFM) shall be the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice.

SEC. 2. The DENR, through its Community and Provincial Environment and Natural Resource Offices, in coordination with the local government units and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall, at all times, take into