

LETTER OF INSTRUCTION NO. 423, July 06, 1976

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TO: The Secretary of Natural Resources
The Secretary of National Defense
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Local Governments and Community
Development
The Secretary of Public Works, Transportation and
Communications
The Secretary of Public Highways
The Secretary of Education and Culture
The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission
The Secretary of Youth and Sports Development
The Secretary of Public Information
The Commissioner of the Budget
The Chairman of the National Science Development
Board
The Chairman of Human Settlement Commission
All others concerned

In order to achieve a holistic ecosystem approach to forest resource management in the country; to prevent irreversible consequences of human activities on the forest ecosystem; to renew and restore at the earliest possible time degraded forest ecosystem characteristics and processes; to encourage greater public participation in agro-forestry activities for the production of food and wood to meet the needs of the population; to conserve water for power, irrigation and domestic use; and to minimize the effects of floods, drought, soil erosion and other manifestations of forest ecosystem deterioration; the following instructions are issued for the guidance of all concerned:

- There is hereby created a Presidential Council for Forest Ecosystem Management, hereinafter called the Council, which shall be composed of the following:

- a) The President Chairman
- b) Tim Sectary of Natural Resources Executive Officer
- c) The Secretary of National Defense Member
- d) The Secretary of Agriculture Member

- e) The Secretary of Local Government & Community Development Member
- f) The Secretary of Public Works Transportation & Communications Member
- g) The Secretary of Public Highways Member
- h) The Secretary of Education & Culture Member
- i) The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission Member
- j) The Secretary of Youth and Sports Development Member
- k) The Secretary of Public Information Member
- l) The Commissioner of the Budget Member
- m) The Chairman of the National Science Development Board Member
- n) The Chairman of the Human Settlements Commission..... Member

In the event of the inability of a member to attend any meeting of the Council, the official next in rank shall temporarily perform the function of such member.

- Function of the Council:

- a)
Formulate programs, rules, guidelines, regulations, and policies that will maintain and enhance the country's forest ecosystem and further prevent its destruction;
- b)
Organize a secretariat and technical staff to assist it in the performance of its functions;
- c)

As an initial thrust, the Council shall formulate a program for forest ecosystem management (PROFEM), define the role of each member agency as well as other agencies in the formulation of this program, create Regional Councils for Forest Ecosystem Management (RECOFEM) which shall be composed of regional representatives of Council members, except those without representatives in regional levels whose heads shall then appoint their own designees, and initiate other activities that will support said program. RECOFEM shall organize implementing corps in the provincial, municipal, and barangay levels to achieve a total involvement of the

citizenry in a nation-wide integrated forestry ecosystem renewal program; and

d)

Perform such other functions as may be necessary to implement this Letter of Instruction.

- Functions of the Executive Officer:

a)

To prepare the agenda for the meeting of the Council and to issue guidelines necessary to carry out effectively the programs that may be formulated;

b)

To initiate formulation and implementation of policies relevant to forest ecosystem management;

c)

To formulate plans and programs in coordination with the member agencies and monitor the activities of each Council member to insure that instructions of the President are followed ;

d)

To report to the President on the progress of the implementation of the program for forest ecosystem management from time to time; and

e)

To exercise such other powers as may be vested in him by the President.

- The Council shall, whenever necessary, require the presence of the heads of bureaus and other government agencies not mentioned above in its meetings to assist in formulating forest ecosystem management policies, plans and programs.

- To support the initial thrust of forest ecosystem management, which involves reforestation, afforestation, agro-forestation, establishment of communal forests, family orchards and recreational parks and areas, the following guidelines are hereby issued:

a)

The Department of Agriculture, through its Bureau of Agricultural Extension and Bureau of Plant Industry, and the Philippine Coconut Authority shall raise seedlings of coconut and fruit-bearing trees for agro-forestation to support the national forest renewal program.

b)

The Department of Public Highways shall construct the necessary access roads leading to tree planting sites that are presently inaccessible by land transportation.

c)

The Department of Natural Resources thru its Bureau of Forest Development, with the support of other agencies, shall undertake intensive forest renewal activities in critically denuded areas and identify areas for reforestation, afforestation and agro-forestation, indicating the boundaries thereof, the type of trees to be planted therein and the suitable period for planting.

d)

The Council members concerned shall call upon the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Bureau of Forest Development, and such other agencies or entities that the Council may designate, to provide the following with tree seedlings they may require for forestry renewal purposes:

1)

The National Irrigation Administration which shall reforest the immediate vicinity of reservoirs under its jurisdiction and assist the Bureau of Forest Development in planting trees on watersheds therein;

2)

The National Power Corporation which shall reforest the immediate vicinity of reservoirs under its sphere of responsibility and assist the Bureau of Forest Development in planting trees on watersheds therein;

3)

The Department of Public Highways which shall plant ornamental and fruit-bearing trees or suitable vegetative cover along the main highways of the country;

4)

Civic and religious organizations which shall undertake forest renewal activities in areas assigned by the Council, preferably agro-forestry and recreational areas;

5)

The students required by the Department of Education and Culture to plant, and care for, trees and ornamental plants within areas indicated by the Council;

6)

The ROTC cadets and military units required by the Armed Forces of the Philippines to plant fruit-bearing trees in military camps and reservations and other areas selected by the Council; and

7)

The local government units, namely the provinces, cities municipalities and barangays, which are called upon by the Department of Local Government and Community Development to establish and maintain communal forest, agro-forest, parks, family and/or communal orchards in selected areas within their respective jurisdictions.

e)

The Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communications shall provide vehicles for the transportation of personnel and seedlings by any of the participating agencies during the planting season and assist in the construction of temporary personnel shelter and field offices.

f)

The Department of National Defense, through the different units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines scattered over the country, shall provide the necessary transport services to members of civic and religious organizations and to students in their forest renewal activities.

g)

The Civil Service Commission shall coordinate tree-planting programs/activities specifically designated for government officials and employees.

h)

The Department of Public Information shall develop and conduct public information programs, in support of programs conducted by the DNR pertaining to forest renewal, protection and conservation.

i)

The National Science Development Board and the Forest Research Institute shall conduct researches on forestry ecosystem and forest renewal.

j)

The Secretary of Youth and Sports Development shall formulate a program of action for which volunteer youth corps, to include out-of-school youths, shall be organized to support the national forest renewal program.

k)

The Chairman of the Human Settlements Commission shall closely coordinate with the Secretary of Natural Resources in the planning of new and the renewal of existing communities to protect, conserve and enhance the environment.

l)

The Budget Commission shall immediately release to the Department of Natural Resources the sum of 33.9 million pesos (P33,900,000.00) to defray reforestation expenses for the Calendar Year 1976 and the additional sum of 3 million pesos (P3,000,000.00) to defray the operational expenses of the Council for the same period, and thereafter, such additional amounts as may be necessary for such purposes: Provided, That the Secretary of Natural Resources in his capacity as Executive Officer of the Council is hereby authorized to utilize any savings of the Bureau of Forest Development for reforestation: Provided, further, That each of the member agencies is hereby authorized to make individual requests to the President upon indorsement by the Executive Officer for funds to be able to perform its respective roles.

- The Council shall submit other programs for forest ecosystem management within the period of six (6) months from its organization.

Letters of Instructions, Executive Orders, Circulars, Rules, Regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Letter of Instructions are hereby revoked or modified accordingly. This Letter of Instructions shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila, this 6th day of July in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-six.

(Sgd.) FERDINAND E. MARCOS

President

Republic of the Philippines

By the President:

(Sgd.) J. C. TUVERA

Presidential Assistant

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