

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE QUARTER 4 MODULE 5

### Environmental Policies in the Philippines

At the end of this module, you are expected to:

1. Name the government environmental laws and policies to protect the land, water and air
2. Describe the implementation of the laws and policies on land, water and air
3. Cite situations observed within the community in which environmental laws and policies are adopted.

### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Our country, the Philippines is a constitutional republic comprising about more than 7000 islands and attracts many tourists and companies.
- Due to this fact, the government assigned different departments or agencies to protect our environment.
- In accordance with **Executive Order No. 192**, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) took charge of all environmental administration.
- The task of DENR is to make policy decisions on environment and natural resources and to achieve sustainable development it needs to balance development activities with environmental management.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (**DENR**) is responsible for the conservation, management, and development of the country's environment and natural resources. It shall ensure the proper use of these resources and the protection of the environment within the framework of sustainable development.

- **Environmental policy** is any measure made by a government or corporation or other public or private organization regarding the effects of human activities on the environment, particularly those measures that are designed to prevent or reduce the harmful effects of human activities on ecosystems.

The **main goal of environmental policy** is to regulate resource use or reduce pollution to promote human welfare and/or protect natural systems.

- Just like other Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines is experiencing **rapid population growth** in its cities.
- The air is being polluted especially in Metro Manila areas.
- Rivers and domestic waters in different towns and cities are suffering from water pollution.
- Because of the increasing population, the volume of waste products is also increasing creating environmental pollution resulting from their disposal.
- Natural environments are increasingly under threat.
- These are the environmental problems the country is facing, and their resolution is a pressing task.

**Population** pressure on cities leads to air, water, noise and other environmental **pollution** as well as decrease in housing facilities and in green vegetation. Problems resulting from **population** pressures on industrial development include industrial and environmental **pollution** and unemployment.

- **Presidential Decree (PD) 1151, the Philippine Environmental Policy**, sets out the national environmental policies, national environmental targets, the right to enjoy a healthy environment, guideline for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and guidelines for implementation bodies.

Year of Enactment and Implementation. Enacted in June 6, 1977. Purpose. **To protect the right of the people to a healthy environment through a requirement of environmental impact assessments and statements.**

- Of interest to private corporations among these is the guideline relating to EIS.
- When engaging in activities and projects that are bound to have a major impact on the environment, all organizations, including government organizations and private enterprises, are **required to draw up and submit an EIS.**
- **Presidential Decree (PD) 1152, the Philippine Environment Code** provides a comprehensive program of environmental protection and management.
- The Code established specific environment management policies and prescribes environmental quality standards.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** - document, prepared and submitted by the project proponent and/or EIA Consultant that serves as an application for an ECC. It is a comprehensive study of the significant impacts of a project on the environment.

- **PD 1586** in 1978 thus built up an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System.**
- Specifically, Section 2 states “There is hereby established an EIS system founded and based on the EIS required, under Sec 4 of PD 1151, of all agencies and instrumentalities of the National Government, including Government Owned Companies and Corporations, as well as private corporations, firms and entities, for every proposed project and undertaking which significantly affect the quality of the environment.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account interrelated socio-economic, cultural and human health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.

In the Philippines, we have Environmental Impact Statement System under **Presidential Decree 1586** which was ratified on June 11, 1978. The **main objective** of this law is to maintain the balance between the environment and the socio-economic development of the country.

- The main concern of Philippine EIS System (PEISS) is with **assessing the direct and indirect impacts of a project** on the biophysical and human environment and guaranteeing that these impacts are addressed by proper environmental protection and enhancement measures.
- It “aids proponents in incorporating environmental considerations in planning their projects as well as in determining the environment’s impact on their project.”
- Government Agencies (GAs) as reiterated by **RA 7160 or the Local Government Code** (LGC) have an important role in environmental management.
- The DENR felt the urgency to develop an integrated approach towards an effective implementation of the country’s environmental management functions through a formalized interagency collaboration specifically under the Philippine EIS System.

**RA 7160**, otherwise known as the Local Government Code was enacted into law, transferring control and responsibility of delivering basic services to the hands of local government units (LGU). It aimed to enhance provision of services in the grass roots level as well as improve the efficiency in resource allocation

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with 29 GAs was made to
  - (i) incorporate environmental aspects and consider the conditions of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) into their decision-making process, and
  - (ii) require the issuance of an ECC prior to the release of permits, licenses and resolutions by the participating GAs.
- Some revisions have been made and one of these is to “enhance the effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the PEISS.”
- The revisions focus on the integration of new EMB-DENR policies to further promote **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as a planning and decision-making tool** under the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System (PEISS).
- It is also stated that the **findings of EIA may be used/ considered in giving permits, clearances, licenses, endorsements, resolutions, and other government approvals.**
- The **three major environmental problems** that the government agencies are facing: water pollution, air pollution and waste products which affect the quality of soil.
- Water pollution of rivers, lakes and marine water in the Philippines is now in a very serious state, major rivers in Metro Manila areas are heavily polluted by industrial and domestic effluent and wastes.
- In rural areas, water quality is dropping due to agricultural chemicals, chemical fertilizers, heavy metals and toxic substances.

Losses due to environmental damage in pollution, the **Philippines** has many **water**-related laws, but their enforcement is weak and beset

with **problems** that include: inadequate resources, poor database, and weak cooperation among different agencies and Local Government Units (LGUs).

- **Republic Act No. 9275 (RA 9275) or the “Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004”** an act providing for a comprehensive water quality management and for other purposes.

The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 (**Republic Act No. 9275**) aims to protect the country's water bodies from pollution from land-based sources (industries and commercial establishments, agriculture and community/household activities).

- The State shall pursue a policy of economic growth in a manner consistent with the **protection, preservation and revival** of the quality of our fresh, brackish and marine waters.
- To achieve this end, the framework for sustainable development shall be pursued.

As such, it shall be the policy of the State:

- a. To streamline processes and procedures in the prevention, control and abatement of pollution of the country's water resources;
- b. To promote environmental strategies, use of appropriate economic instruments and of control mechanisms for the protection of water resources;
- c. To formulate a holistic national program of water quality management that recognizes that water quality management issues cannot be separated from concerns about water sources and ecological protections, water supply, public health and quality of life;
- d. To formulate an integrated water quality management framework through proper delegation and effective coordination of functions and activities;
- e. To promote commercial and industrial processes and products that are environment friendly and energy efficient;
- f. To encourage cooperation and self-regulation among citizens and industries through the application of incentives and market-based instruments and to promote the role of private industrial enterprises in shaping its regulatory profile within the acceptable boundaries of public health and environment;
- g. To provide for a comprehensive management program for water pollution focusing on pollution prevention;
- h. To promote public information and education and to encourage the participation of an informed and active public in water quality management and monitoring;
- i. To formulate and enforce a system of accountability for short and long-term adverse environmental impact of a project, program or activity; and
- j. To encourage civil society and other sectors, particularly labor, the academe and business undertaking environment-related activities in their efforts to organize, educate and motivate the people in addressing pertinent environmental issues and problems at the local and national levels.

- Furthermore, according to **PD 984, section 6, item “g” (Pollution Control Law)**, this gives the agency the right to collect “Environmental Users Fees” (pollution charges) in proportion to the burden on the environment.
- **PD 984** put in the DENR (then the NPCC) with "the authority to issue, renew or deny permits under such conditions as it may deem reasonable for the prevention and abatement of pollution from the discharge of sewage, industrial waste and enforce reasonable fees and charges for the issuance or renewal of all permits herein required."

**PD 984**, enacted 1976, Implemented 1978. Purpose. To prevent, abate and control pollution of water, air and land for the more effective utilization of the resources.

- The major environmental problem is air pollution.
- Many cities and areas in the Philippines are exposed to air pollution.
- The causes of air pollution can be divided into two depending on the type of source:
  - a. **mobile sources** such as automobiles
  - b. **fixed sources** such as power plants and factories.
- Based on the research conducted in Metro Manila area in 1990 it revealed that an estimated 21% of particle-like substances, 83% of nitrogen oxides, 99% of carbon monoxides and 12% of sulfur oxides are due to automobile exhaust.

According to the 2019 World **Air Quality** report, the **Philippines** was said to have 17.6 ug/m3 of PM2.5 – holding the 57<sup>th</sup> place from the country with the worst **air quality**. In contrast, the **Philippines** ranks as the country with the lowest pollutant amongst Southeast Asia countries.

- To deal with this problem, the government assembled **RA 8749**, an act providing for a comprehensive air pollution control policy and for other purposes.
- This act shall be known as “**Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999**”.

The passage of the Philippine Clean Air Act (**RA 8749**) on June 23, 1999, provides for a comprehensive air pollution control policy, as it outlines the government's measures to reduce air pollution by including environmental protection activities into its development plans.

- The State shall pursue a policy of balancing development and environmental protection.
- To achieve this end, the framework for sustainable development shall be pursued. It shall be the policy of the State to:
  - a) Formulate a holistic national program of air pollution management that shall be implemented by the government through proper delegation and effective coordination of functions and activities;
  - b) Encourage cooperation and self-regulation among citizens and industries through the application of market-based instruments;

- c) Focus primarily on pollution prevention rather than on control and provide for a comprehensive management program for air pollution;
  - d) Promotes public information and education and to encourage the participation of an informed and active public in air quality planning and monitoring; and
  - e) Formulate and enforce a system of accountability for short and long-term adverse environmental impact of a project, program or activity. This shall include the setting up of a funding or guarantee mechanism for cleanup and environmental rehabilitation and compensation for personal damages
- Lastly, we have the Solid Waste Management (SWM) which is considered as one of the most serious environmental problems in the Philippines.
  - Annually, the estimated waste generated is 10 million tons in 2010 and expected to rise by 40% in the year 2020.
  - **Republic Act No. 9003 also known as the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000”** provides the necessary policy framework, institutional mechanisms and mandate to the local government units (LGUs) to achieve 25% waste reduction through establishing an integrated solid waste management plan based on 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle).

Senator Loren Legarda, principal **author of R.A. 9003**, said ecological solid waste management should be a way of life to attain a zero waste economy.

- It is the policy of the State to adopt a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program which shall:
  - a. Ensure the protection of public health and environment;
  - b. Utilize environmentally-sound methods that maximize the utilization of valuable resources and encourage resources conservation and recovery;
  - c. Set guidelines and targets for solid waste avoidance and volume reduction through source reduction and waste minimization measures, including composting, recycling, reuse, recovery, green charcoal process, and others, before collection, treatment and disposal in appropriate and environmentally-sound solid waste management facilities in accordance with ecologically sustainable development principles;
  - d. Ensure the proper segregation, collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of solid waste through the formulation and adoption of the best environmental practices in ecological waste management excluding incineration;
  - e. Promote national research and development programs for improved solid waste management and resource conservation techniques, more effective institutional arrangement and indigenous and improved methods of waste reduction, collection, separation and recovery;

- f. Encourage greater private sector participation in solid waste management;
  - g. Retain primary enforcement and responsibility of solid waste management with local government units while establishing a cooperative effort among the national government, other local government units, non-government organizations, and the private sector;
  - h. Encourage cooperation and self-regulation among waste generators through the application of market-based instruments;
  - i. Institutionalize public participation in the development and implementation of national and local integrated, comprehensive and ecological waste management programs; and
  - j. Strengthen the integration of ecological solid waste management and resource conservation and recovery topics into the academic curricula of formal and nonformal education in order to promote environmental awareness and action among the citizenry.
- Almost all waste is thrown in **open dumpsites**.
  - “**Smokey Mountain**” in Tondo and “**Payatas Dumpsite**” in Quezon City are famous dumpsites in the Philippines that are now closed due to the mandate of RA 9003.
  - Due to this incidence, many of the waste products or garbage of the citizens are illegally thrown in different open areas, lakes and rivers.
  - As a result of this action, soil pollution, sanitation problems, insect and pest plague, as well as the continuous combustion of wastes or incineration, air pollution, and water pollution increases.
  - The collection and disposal of solid waste is the responsibility of local authorities, according to the law.
  - Despite the methods of disposal adopted as described above, the increased cost of refuse disposal is now a problem.

It was called "**Smokey Mountain**" because of the thick smoke coming from burning waste. There were 2 million tons of waste dumped there. It made a big **mountain**. The reason **Smokey Mountain closed** was because the local government repossessed that land for commercial development. They relocated the residents as a result to neighboring landfills.

The **Payatas dumpsite**, established in the 1970s, was an open dumpsite in Lupang Pangako in Payatas, Quezon City. The **Payatas landslide** was a garbage dump collapse at Payatas, Quezon City, Philippines, on July 10, 2000. A large pile of garbage first collapsed and then went up in flames which resulted in the destruction of about 100 squatters' houses. The dumping ground was immediately closed following the incident by then President Joseph Estrada but was reopened weeks later by then-Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. to avert an epidemic in the city due to uncollected garbage caused by the closure.<sup>[2]</sup>In 2004, the **Payatas dumpsite** was reconfigured as a controlled disposal facility. but was closed in December 2010.

- **For environmental policies to be implemented, it should outline the commitment to reduce its impact on the environment.**
- The policy should be specific and relevant to the activities.
- It should be realistic, achievable and committed to lessen or reduce environmental impact.

**Environmental policy** can include laws and **policies** addressing water and air pollution, chemical and oil spills, smog, drinking water quality, land conservation and management, and wildlife protection, such as the protection of endangered species.

- Here are some **criteria** that an environmental policy should contain:
  1. Continually improve environmental performance.
  2. Prevent pollution and reduce impact on the environment.
  3. Comply with relevant environmental laws.
  4. Efficient use of water, energy and other natural resources.
  5. Sustainable transport.
  6. Recycling and minimizing waste.
  7. Use of non-toxic products (e.g. biodegradable cleaning products)
  8. Raising awareness and training employees on environmental issues.