



Options for forest verification

Case Study

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Review of Multisectoral Forest Protection Committees in the Philippines

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Introduction

Illegal logging remains as one of the main problems that threaten the sustainability of forests in the Philippines. While there is a lack of reliable information on the extent of illegal logging in the country, it is conceivable that the magnitude of illegal logging is quite substantial. In the absence of accurate figures, one can look at the supply and demand balance in recent years to get an indication of how much drain in the timber stock of the country may be attributed to illegal logging. During the period 1990-2000 the total wood supply was about 2.1 million cubic metres (mcm), while the demand over the same period was estimated to average more than 3.2 mcm. This represents an equivalent shortage in supply of around 1.1 mcm (FMB-DENR, 2005). In the next 20 years this deficit in wood supply is projected to increase by more than 100% as the demand for wood is likely to grow by 200% while the supply is estimated to increase by only 100%. The persistent deficit in wood supply begs the question on how is the deficit affecting the stock of timber resources in the remaining forests, particularly those which have been withdrawn from commercial exploitation for protection purposes. Corollary to this is the question as to how much of this deficit in wood supply is filled up with logs extracted from forests where logging is prohibited?

The abundance of communities in and around many forests in the Philippines and the limited livelihood opportunities thereof also suggests that illegal logging is a common source of income to many households. It is estimated that there are now more than 20 million people living in the Philippine uplands (FMB-DENR, 2005). About half of them are believed to be solely dependent on forest resources for their livelihood. These settlers are characterised by a high annual population growth rate of 2.8 percent, around 0.5 percent higher

than the country's average population growth rate of 2.3 percent (Sajise 1988). In the absence of viable alternative livelihoods, it is easy to imagine that many households are engaged in illegal logging to support their daily needs. In the aftermath of devastating flash-floods in Southern Luzon, a study on the causes and effects of the disaster revealed that illegal logging is one of the chief sources of income for communities living in and adjacent to forested areas of the watersheds where the floodwaters originated (FDC, 2005). Formal documentation of cases like these may be scarce, but this is a common picture of the heavy dependence of upland communities on forest resources in many areas across the country.

To curb illegal logging and address related livelihoods issues, the government is now moving along the path of developing new sustainable sources of wood products through plantation development and of creating more opportunities for forest dependent communities to make a decent living through alternative livelihood development, reform of policies and institutions focused on poverty eradication, and other similar programs. It is the expectation that in the long run these measures will create an environment that is more conducive to sustainable forestry than illegal logging, and henceforth bring a lasting solution to the progressive degradation of forest resources in the country. Simultaneously, the government remains committed to the improvement of forest protection measures to stop illegal logging in the short to medium term before the long term measures have an opportunity to take their full effects. One of these measures is the Multisectoral Forest Protection Committee (MFPC). There follows a discussion of the key political, institutional and socioeconomic dimensions of the MFPCs both historically and in terms of recent developments.



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This paper provides the legal and institutional context of MFPC as a supplement to the original paper of the same title (Cruz and Tapia, 2005). Specifically, the legal and institutional framework of legitimate harvesting and transport of timber resources are described. Information on the process of authorising and monitoring timber harvesting operations and how the relevant laws and regulations are enforced are covered. The paper also explores the likely impacts of MFPC actions on the life and welfare of upland communities whose livelihoods could be adversely affected if illegal logging stops.

Historical background of MFPC

The once lush tropical rainforests of the Philippines have gone a long way towards the path of deforestation and degradation over the last century. In 1900, about 70% of the 30 million ha total land area of the country was still covered with rainforests. By 1950, only about 50 percent remained. It was estimated that between these periods, about 10 million hectares of forest was lost, averaging 200,000 hectares per year (Sajise, 1998; Borlagdan, Guiang, and Pulhin, 2001). Forest exploitation persisted in the post-independence era following the Second World War, with records showing an annual rate of deforestation as high as 172,000 hectares from the 1950s through 1973 (Boado, 1988). During the Marcos regime, deforestation rates peaked to as high as 300,000 ha per year, putting the Philippines at the top of the list of countries with the worst deforestation rates in the Asia-Pacific region (Vitug, 2000). To date, total forest cover is barely 7.123 million ha with only 0.8 million ha old growth forest remaining. During the golden years of logging in the Philippines, there were more than 300 logging concessionaires operating in an area covering more than 10 million ha of forests, equivalent to a third of the country's total land area.

In terms of forest stocks, the country experienced a dramatic drop of resources during the period 1988 to 1994. The two major causes were the decline of stocks of forest resources were logging activities and the conversion of forestland to non-forest uses. Harvesting and logging activities accounted for P48.6 billion in losses during this period (NSCB, 2005). The country also lost resources worth P20.4 billion due to the conversion of forestland to non-forest use. As such, from being the supplier of about 30% of world's wood demands in 1965 (Thompson, 2001 as cited by Defensor, 2004), the Philippines is now in the company of those countries that are net importers of wood materials. Even with this change in status, forest degradation continues.

Widespread clamour to halt the massive forest destruction started to be heard from civil society and the other interest groups in the 1970s. By the 1980s, especially after the EDSA People's Power Revolution, a major forest policy change, from highly centralised to more participatory mode of governance, and from a timber production oriented to more protection focused management approach, started to emerge. This change was manifest through log and lumber export bans, a ban on timber harvesting in old growth forests, delineation of boundaries between forest lands and national parks, increased forest charges, massive

tree planting efforts, reforestation and establishment of plantations, creation of a sound national protected area system to promote biodiversity conservation, and implementation of ecosystem and watershed approach in forest management. The changing policy direction is also evidenced by the devolution of certain forest management and protection functions to local government units (LGUs), participation of the civil society particularly the non-government organisations (NGOs) and People's Organisations (POs) in certain forestry activities, recognition of the vested rights of indigenous peoples (IPs) over their ancestral lands, and the adoption of community-based forest management as the national strategy for sustainable forest management and social justice. In sum, forest governance (once dominated by the former Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR]) has evolved into a multisectorally-driven affair where stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in various aspects of forest management. Forest protection and law enforcement, including third party monitoring, are perhaps some of the earliest tasks of forest management in the country to go multisectoral.

The multisectoral forest protection initiative in the Philippines began as early as 1975 through government promulgations like Presidential Decree 705, otherwise known as the Forestry Reform Code, and subsequently the formation of the National Law Enforcement Committee in 1984. These programs joined together different government agencies for the protection, development and rehabilitation of forest lands. However, despite these initiatives, the forest resources continued to decline as the pressure from both the rapidly growing population in the uplands increased and large scale logging (both technically legal through concession systems and illegal) continued.

To help slow the further depletion of forest resources, the DENR sought the assistance for the World Bank to finance the Environment and Natural Resources Sector Adjustment Loan (ENR-SECAL) designed to facilitate forest protection and upland development. The Multisectoral Forest Protection Committee (MFPC) was conceived as a forest protection strategy of the DENR through the ENR-SECAL Program under the Monitoring and Enforcement Component (MEC).

Under the ENR-SECAL Project, the first 15 pilot MFPCs were organised in 5 regions, 5 provinces, and 5 municipalities in 1992. The program paid for the consultants and the expenses of DENR personnel who provided most of the initial facilitation and mobilisation works. The ENR-SECAL also provided the resources for the preparation of the Manual of Procedures (MOP) in 1994 which stipulated the detailed operational guidelines of MFPC with regards to its functions and activities. Moreover, it supported the conduct of the first National MFPC Congress in 1995, the nationwide assessment of MFPC in 1997, expert consultation for technical assistance, acquisition of aircraft and sea vessel for patrolling and surveillance, and livelihood development in selected upland communities. With a full complement of resources, many of the MFPCs demonstrated what they were capable of doing to stop

illegal logging. However as the World Bank support ended, the vulnerability of MFPCs to the absence of outside funding became evident as most of the MFPCs folded up after the closure of the ENR-SECAL Project.

Recent history and current status of MFPC

The majority of the more than 300 MFPCs formed during the lifetime of the ENR-SECAL Project faded after the completion of the project. Apparently for many MFPCs, the completion of the project supporting their activities exposed the inadequacy of the effort to wean the MFPCs away from heavy reliance on the support of the World Bank. Without the support of the World Bank many MFPCs found it difficult to perform its tasks that mostly require financial inputs for travel, communications and workshops. As of today, the number of active MFPCs is uncertain due to the inactivity of the National Federation of MFPCs that is supposed to be responsible for facilitating the coordination of all MFPCs in the country. The National Federation's hiatus notwithstanding, isolated cases of persistent MFPC activity in some towns and provinces are noted. The remaining MFPC activity along with the MFPC variants that arose from the original concept of MFPC (e.g., Provincial Task Force Against Illegal Logging in Davao del Norte) and the brief but significant accomplishments of many MFPCs that are now long gone, continue to sustain the acceptability to the DENR of the MFPC as a strategy for curbing illegal logging in the country.

The DENR has indicated its renewed commitment to adopt the MFPC as a protection and development strategy. This is manifested in the Revised Master Plan for Forestry Development (DENR, FAO and UNDP, 2003) and in the 2005-2010 General Program of Action for the Forestry Sector of the DENR. Between 2005 and 2010 the DENR is aiming to support the reactivation and strengthening the operation of 97 MFPCs nationwide. It has allocated about USD15,000 annually per MFPC to help finance part of the costs of their operations. It is important to note that the DENR will also support other multisectoral forest protection initiatives such as the likes of task forces against illegal logging, multipartite protection councils, and multisectoral monitoring teams keeping watch on the compliance of project implementors with the terms and conditions of their ECC and other relevant laws and regulations.

Legal framework for timber utilisation in the Philippines

State ownership of natural resources

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that all lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum and other mineral oils, forests or timber, wildlife, flora and fauna are owned by the State. The exploration, development and utilisation of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State, primarily through the DENR, which may directly undertake such activities or may enter into contract with duly qualified parties through joint venture, co-production, or production sharing agreements. In the

past 4 decades or so, and as provided for under the old Constitution of the Philippines (1938), the Timber Licence Agreement (TLA) was the common instrument used by the government to authorise qualified companies to undertake logging operations in production forests for a period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years. In total, more than 300 TLAs were issued by the government before it was deemed unconstitutional in the early 1990s based on the provisions of the 1987 Constitution. Henceforth, the issuance of TLAs was discontinued and replaced by the Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA), Industrial Forest Management Agreement (IFMA), the Socialised IFMA (SIFMA), and the Protected Area Community Based Resources Management Agreement (PCBRMA) as the legal instruments through which authority to utilise timber resources in production forests is granted. Today there are less than 5 TLAs still in effect with the last agreement set to expire in 2011.

Where it is legal to harvest timber

The Constitution mandates the government to delineate the boundaries between production forests lands and national parks and to define the limits between production and protection areas. Utilisation of timber resources is allowed only in production forests, as protection areas are set aside for the conservation and protection of biodiversity and other unique but critical resources and ecological functions of the forests.

The Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 705), the principal law governing forest management in the Philippines and the National Integrated Protected Area Systems (NIPAS) Act define protection areas to include all:

- Areas within critical watersheds (watersheds supporting infrastructure like multipurpose dams, irrigation systems, hydropower generation plants, domestic water supply systems)
- Areas above 1,000 m in elevation
- Areas with slope of more than 50%
- Rocky areas
- Mossy forests
- Old growth forests
- Areas within 20 metres of perennial streams
- Proclaimed natural reserves and natural parks
- Proclaimed watershed reserves
- Proclaimed forest reserves
- Proclaimed wildlife refuge and sanctuaries
- All proclaimed NIPAS areas

No timber harvesting is allowed inside the protected areas.

Illegal logging and illegal logs defined

Executive Order No. 277 (issued by the President of the Philippines, 1987), which amends PD 705, states that the mere possession of timber or other forest products without legal documents as required under existing forest regulations is illegal logging and is considered a criminal act. Particularly cutting, gathering, collecting, or removing timber or other forest products from any forest land, or from alienable and disposable public land, or from private land, without any authority or appropriate

agreement with the government, or possess timber or other forest products without the legal documents as required under existing forest laws and regulations are considered illegal. In addition harvesting beyond the boundary of the approved cutting area, harvesting beyond the contract duration and harvesting in excess of the annual allowable cut, designated in an agreement through an Integrated Annual Operations Plan (IAOP) required of all licensees, are considered illegal.

All logs produced through any of the illegal activities described above are considered illegal and are subject to confiscation by the government along with the machinery, equipment, implements and tools illegally used. Further, logs are deemed illegal if transported without a duly approved Certificate of Timber Origin (CTO). A Certificate of Transport Agreement (CTA) and Certificate of Transshipment (COT) are also required along with a CTO for all logs that are shipped outside of the province or normal log delivery route from the cutting area to the wood processing plant or main log storage area of the licensee, or if the conveyance used for transport is not owned by the licensee. In the absence of these documents, all transported logs are considered illegal.

Issuance of agreements

Under PD 705 as amended by EO 277, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is the government agency principally responsible for forest management and hence the execution and issuance of all agreements and permits related to timber resources utilisation including the TLA (DAO 1997-32). When TLA were still allowed, the DENR Secretary had the authority to execute the TLA upon the recommendation of the DENR field offices. There are two major requirements necessary in order for a TLA holder to begin its logging operations; an approved IAOP and an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

The TLA is required to prepare an IAOP showing the detailed plan of actions that will be undertaken in the actual logging operations including the measures that will be implemented to minimise damages on the residual forests and other impact areas. The IAOP is submitted to the DENR field offices where it is reviewed for technical soundness and recommendations to the office of the DENR Secretary are made. Before the agreement is approved by the Secretary, the IAOP is further reviewed by the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) to ensure that the plan of actions is complete and technically sound. If found in order, the IAOP is recommended by the FMB to the Secretary for approval.

In addition to the IAOP, the TLA holder also prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) showing the prospective impacts of the IAOP on the environment, and an environmental management plan (EMP) to mitigate the projected adverse impacts of the IAOP. The Environmental Management Bureau conducts the review of the EIS through an independent Technical Review Committee (TRC) that ascertains the environmental soundness of the IAOP and the adequacy of the mitigation measures proposed to address the negative impacts of the IAOP implementation. The ECC is issued to the TLA upon the recommendation of the TRC.

Monitoring of legitimate logging operations

The implementation of logging operations as indicated in the IAOP is monitored mainly by the DENR field office, particularly the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO). The CENRO, through its Timber Management Officer (TMO), monitors the daily logging operations to ensure that the IAOP is implemented properly. It also conducts an annual performance evaluation based on an annual compliance report submitted by the TLA at the end of each year of operation. The TMO is also supposed to regularly monitor the daily logging operations on site to ensure compliance with the annual allowable cut, cutting area limits, protection of healthy residuals and other provisions for environmentally safe timber harvesting.

The regional office of the EMB also conducts its own monitoring of the logging operations to ensure that the TLA holder complies fully with the IAOP and the terms and conditions of the ECC. For this purpose, a multisectoral monitoring team (MMT) is formed consisting of representatives of key stakeholder groups such as NGOs, local government unit (LGU), religious sector and civic organisations. Unlike the MFPCs, MMTs are well funded as the cost of monitoring is borne out of a trust account managed by EMB from fees collected from the TLA holder.

In one site where there is still a TLA in operation, MFPCs organised by the LGUs are also actively undertaking monitoring activities independent of the monitoring conducted by the DENR to ensure that the logging operations are keeping within the legal bounds (pers. Comm.). They monitor both the operations and the transport of logs along the highways.

Monitoring shipment of logs

The legality of logs in shipment is mainly established on the basis of the CTO and CTA described above. The CTO is issued usually by the TMO of the CENRO with jurisdiction over the TLA conducting logging operations and subscribed to by notary public or an LGU executive officer. Before the CTO is issued, the logs must be properly measured and the legitimacy of the source of the logs must be verified and established. Blank forms of CTOs are properly documented and numbered before they are issued to TMOs. The TMOs see to it that the forms are filled out correctly and completely. Otherwise, any inconsistency and noncompliance with the standards and procedures for issuance of CTOs will make the issuing officer as well as the shipper liable to criminal and administrative charges. Monthly accounting of used and unused CTO forms is regularly made by requiring the TMOs to submit monthly reports of all used and unused CTO forms to avoid irregularities in the use and issuance of CTOs. A more detailed description of the process of issuing CTOs is found in DENR Administrative Order No. 07 of February 17, 1994. Despite the stringent procedure for issuing CTOs, cases of fake, forged and recycled CTOs are still rampant.

Log shipments are monitored in various stations (i.e., checkpoints along highways and key sea ports) strategically located along normal routes of log shipment. The monitoring officers record in their log books all presentations of CTO with its

unique identifying numbers along with the time of presentation, identification of the conveyances and examine the shipments in transit for compliance with the conditions and specifications in the CTO. If the CTO and other documents required for shipment are in order, the monitoring officer then allows the shipment to proceed to its destination. Otherwise, the shipment is held up for further examination and confiscation if necessary.

Monitoring entry of imported logs

The permit to import logs is issued by the DENR to holders of TLA, IFMA, Wood Processing Plant Permit (WPP) or Certificate of Registration (CR) as wood furniture manufacturer, agent, contractor, or dealer of logs, poles, piles and lumber (DENR Administrative Order No. 99-46). This permit should be registered by its holder with the Philippine Wood Producers' Association (PWPA), and then subsequently stamped by the concerned Office of the Regional Executive Director (RED) of the DENR before the permit becomes a valid Authority to Import logs and wood materials.

Key requirements for the registration of agents, contractors and dealers of imported wood materials include:

- A copy of sale or supply contract between the agent, contractor or dealer and the foreign exporter of wood materials for at least one (1) year, duly authenticated by the Philippine commercial attaché or embassy at the country of origin of the wood materials.
- A certificate from the Philippine Wood Producers Association that the type or kind and volume of a particular wood material(s) the agent, contractor, or dealer intends to import within a current year are well within the importation rationalisation program of total 'allowable capacity measure'.

Holder of Certificates of Registration shall, among other responsibilities:

- Submit to the DENR a monthly report on imported wood materials not later than the fifth (5th) day of the succeeding month to include, among others, the following information:
 - Balance of previous months;
 - Purchase(s) made during the month under report;
 - Total volume/quantity handled;
 - Volume processed/sold; and
 - Balance at end of the month.
- Provide from the RED concerned, or his authorised representative, the required written authority to import before disposing through sales the imported wood materials;
- Allow authorised DENR personnel to inspect the premises where the imported wood materials are stored and to examine records concerning withdrawals or disposition of same; and
- Provide such other related information as may be required by the Secretary or his authorised representative.

The ports of entry for all imported logs are limited to a few specified ports.¹

Monitoring shipment of imported logs

The Authority to Import, or Certificate of Registration to Import, wood materials issued by the DENR and the clearance of the imported commodities issued by the Bureau Of Customs (BOC), are sufficient documents for the imported wood materials to be moved out of, and or transported from, the port of entry to the point of destination, i.e. to the importer's premise(s), consignee(s), or consignor(s). Further, the importer or his authorised representatives, upon the arrival of the shipment at the point of destination, provides the CENRO concerned with photostatic copies of the following documents:

- Authority to Import or a Certificate of Registration to Import wood materials;
- Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the country of origin indicating therein the kind of quarantine treatment requested and/or applied, if any;
- Bill of lading; and
- Summary of the Packing List

One week after the end of each month, the CENRO concerned, through its Regional Office, submits to the Director of Forest Management Bureau (FMB) a monthly report on importation of aforesaid wood materials, furnishing the PWPA a copy thereof.

The documents required for the transport of imported logs from the storage area or mill site to any point of consignments or sales within a given defined areas allowed under existing regulations or within the region itself include the pertinent sales invoice and/or delivery receipts. However, if the imported logs are to be moved out of the defined area or region, the transport of imported logs needs a Phytosanitary Certificate and corresponding inspection report of the Quarantine Officer concerned, the Bill of lading, and the Summary of Packing List duly authenticated by the CENRO concerned and/or his authorised representatives, as additional supporting documents that will be inspected and verified by monitoring officers.

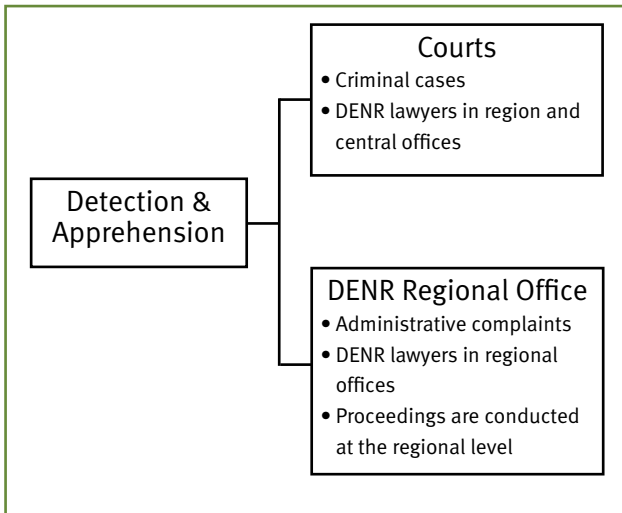
Monitoring teams

The key people involved in the actual monitoring works on the ground are personnel of the DENR field offices. Operationally, the forest guards and other forest protection officers under the Community Environment and Natural Resource Office (CENRO) are at the frontline as far as forest protection and law enforcement at the field level is concerned. They are organised into monitoring teams, most of which are posted in stations along highways and major harbor stations. Due to funding constraints, only on rare occasions are these monitoring teams actually mobile, such as when in pursuit of forest law violators. The Forest Utilisation and Law Enforcement Division of the Office of the Regional Executive Director (RED) provides the necessary support to monitoring teams and coordinates the law enforcement efforts in the region.

The monitoring teams are responsible for detection and apprehension of perpetrators of illegal logging activities, including those in possession of illegally sourced forest products. It is usually the monitoring team consisting of CENRO personnel that is responsible for validating CTOs, authority to import and all other

necessary documentations proving the legality of the forest products in shipment. All apprehensions are reported to the Office of the RED where the case may be settled administratively. Otherwise, the case is elevated to the courts for litigation and final judgment (Figure 1). Herein lie the two major weaknesses of forest law enforcement efforts of the DENR.

Figure 1: Forest law enforcement in the Philippines (Amaro, 2006)



The first is the vulnerability of the process of validating proofs of legality of forest products in transit to either the inability or malpractices of the enforcement officers individually, or in connivance with a higher level authority to whom they report to. Many accounts of coercion of enforcement officers, to allow the safe passage of illegal logs and other forest products, have been reported. Enforcement officers are usually susceptible to coercion due mainly to inadequate skills, absence of logistics (guns, communication systems and transportation) and the assurance of legal support when counter charges are filed against them in court by the apprehended law offenders. But accounts of malpractices of enforcement officers are also not unheard of. Cases of CTOs being reused for unauthorised shipments are stories often told. This signifies a weakness in the monitoring process where opportunities for connivance among enforcement officers are widespread.

The second is the inadequate ability of the DENR to consummate the process of law enforcement when violations are ascertained. As difficult as it is to do surveillance and apprehension of violators, there is usually little assurance that apprehensions will lead to convictions. Influential offenders of the law are usually able to buy their violations out, or are able to win their case in an incompetent court with the complement of a battery of skilful lawyers. This is very demoralising to the hardworking enforcement officers in the field who are in constant risk of being harmed and who are not in need of any additional disincentive to do their job faithfully.

The above weaknesses do not mean that law enforcement in the country is altogether lacking. In fact, there are far more positive developments now than there are failures, as described in the sections below.

Forest law enforcement landscape in the Philippines

Current strategies

Forest law enforcement in the Philippines is the main responsibility of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, being the main government agency in charge of the supervision and administration of the country's forest lands and resources. As described above, the ground level enforcement of forest laws is carried out by the field personnel of the DENR. This, however, is not enough as the manpower and financial resources at the DENR's disposal is extremely limited compared to the magnitude and diversity of works that need to be done. To address this limitation, the DENR has initiated other measures to fill in the gaps in forest law enforcement.

In addition to the creation of the Multisectoral Forest Protection Committees, forest law enforcement is being augmented through the deputation of environment and natural resource officers for greater involvement of the citizenry in the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources. Similarly, coordination with other agencies, particularly with the local government units (LGUs), Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the media is being pursued to generate broader support. Moreover, the DENR supports the training of judges, prosecutors and law professors on forest laws and regulations as well as the designation of Special Courts and Prosecutors for illegal logging to speed up the prosecution of court cases. It also supports parallel initiatives of the environmental law groups like the *Tanggol Kalikasan* (which literally means 'Defender of Nature') to provide legal assistance to forest law enforcers such as forest guards and deputised forest officers who experience harassments and legal suits from the apprehended illegal operators.

More recently, intensified efforts on forest law enforcement has been pursued through the Task Force *Sagip Kalikasan* (which literally means 'Save Nature') under the Office of the Secretary of DENR. Among its major functions as stipulated in DENR Special Order No. 2004-888 includes the investigation and arrest of forest law violators, monitoring and assisting in the prosecution and final conviction of the violators. The Task force is also mandated to establish a data base of all its operations, including the monitoring of the prosecution of cases recommend to the DENR Secretary, the deputation of government agencies or employees, institutions, individuals and other concerned citizens and environmental officers, and the reorganisation of Forest Rangers to be effective protectors of the environment. In addition, The Task Force is responsible for coordinating the law enforcement activities of the DENR with the activities of other government agencies.

Challenges and opportunities

Despite current initiatives, the Philippines continue to face major challenges in the area of forest law enforcement. Among these are:

1. Integrating forest law enforcement with the broader concern for poverty alleviation and social equity.

Illegal timber harvesting and poaching are usually done with the involvement of local communities who have no alternative sources of livelihood except to engage in these activities. With more than 10 million of the upland population directly depending on the forest land and its resources for survival, no amount of forest enforcement efforts will be successful unless they simultaneously address the prevailing poverty and social inequity in the upland areas. A major challenge to law enforcement in the Philippines is therefore to integrate it with the overall effort of community-based forest management, which balances the regulatory aspect with the provision of development opportunities to address the livelihood needs of the forest-dependent communities.

2. Developing effective mechanisms for active and sustained involvement of the different sectors.

Experience from MFPCs indicates that the active involvement of the different sectors such as the LGUs, other government agencies, private sector, and civil society is a key factor for the success of the forest law enforcement program. However, the same also reveals that apart from the provision of adequate support and incentive systems, multisectoral initiatives in most cases may be difficult to sustain. A lot of MFPCs have become inactive after the stoppage of the support from the Monitoring and Evaluation Component of the Environment and Natural Resources Sectoral Adjustment Loan (ENR-SECAL) Program that the DENR funded through the World Bank. The challenge for DENR is therefore to facilitate the evolution of an effective mechanism for an active and sustained multisectoral involvement in forest law enforcement. An important component of such mechanism is the provision of adequate support and incentives to ensure the continuing long-term operation of the multisectoral group.

3. Continuous capacity building of individuals and sectors involved in forest law enforcement.

There is a need for the continuous upgrading of the capability of the people and institutions involved in forest law enforcement. In addition to the DENR forest rangers and other forest protection officers, continuous trainings should also be provided to judges and prosecutors on forestry laws and technical forestry matters related to the performance of their functions. Moreover, human resource development should be complemented with the provision of logistics like communication equipment, transportation facilities as well as legal support.

4. Improving the integrity and credibility of forest law enforcers within DENR.

As the primary agency for the protection and maintenance of the country's environment and natural resources, DENR's staff should serve as a role model in forest law enforcement. Unfortunately, some forest law enforcers from DENR are themselves a party to illegal activities or do not have the will to enforce forest laws. This has tarnished the credibility of the institution and

hence limits its effectiveness in mobilising the support from the other sectors. A major challenge to DENR is therefore to ensure that its forest law enforcement officers have the appropriate, knowledge, skills and values to do their job in an honest, effective and efficient manner. This may be pursued by conducting regular value reorientation trainings in addition to the normal trainings received by forest law enforcers. They should likewise be trained on networking and institutional collaboration to appreciate the value and develop the skills of working with other sectors. Moreover, forest law enforcers should be provided with adequate logistical support and incentives to do a good job. Capability of law enforcement officers for mobile monitoring should also be enhanced to complement monitoring in stations along transport routes. Lastly, strict punishment should be imposed on law enforcement officers who are convicted of participating in illegal activities.

5. Allowing independent monitoring of in-house monitoring system.

To make the monitoring of compliance with existing laws and regulations fair, honest and objective, independent monitoring may be necessary. The independent monitor will monitor not only cases of violations of forest laws and regulations on forest resource utilisation, but will also monitor performance of law enforcement officers. Through this mechanism, the performance and credibility of DENR law enforcement officers could be enhanced along with the overall effectiveness of law enforcement. An independent monitor could be any entity not organic to the DENR and desirably not local, such an international NGO that is free from any interest on the subject of monitoring. The main constraint here will be the cost and the acceptability of an outsider as a monitor of domestic affairs. Alternatively, the MFPC type of monitors could serve the purpose if its objectivity, independence and integrity could be established (credibility).

6. Sourcing adequate and sustainable financial resources.

Considering the very limited budget of DENR, sourcing out additional budget to support its forest law enforcement activities is another major challenge it should be able to hurdle. Considering the tight financial situation of the Philippine Government, lobbying for more budgetary support from the national government appears not to be a viable option. One possible alternative is to work out a mechanism where a certain percentage of forest charges from timber harvesting may be set apart for rehabilitation and forest law enforcement activities. Another is sourcing out additional funds from external sources to develop and institutionalise a workable forest protection mechanism with specific focus on sustainability.

7. Improving efficiency in the forest law enforcement program.

Looking for additional funds to support forest law enforcement is a step in the right direction, though may not necessarily be an easy way to increase resources for

enforcement purposes. While waiting for additional funds to come in, it may be helpful to innovate ways through which limited funds can be used more efficiently. Developing mechanisms to unify law enforcement efforts of various sectors can open new access to resources through collaborative projects where resources are pooled to realise common ends. The DENR can do this within its own territory where several units are engaged in independent and parallel law enforcement efforts, each having a different focus but sharing common goals and visions. Unifying law enforcement across DENR units can lead to greater results even without additional funds. Likewise, the DENR can also pursue collaborative initiatives with other agencies of the government such as the Bureau of Customs, Philippine Coast Guard and Philippine Ports Authority to get additional hands in its enforcement activities.

8. Development of alternative sources of timber.

A passive measure to improve law enforcement though it may be, development of alternative sources of timber is a no regrets option that could divert the focus of timber harvesting (both legitimate and illegal) away from the remaining natural forests. Development of more tree plantations will help ease the heavy pressures on the natural forests to supply the expanding demand for wood and other similar products. All incentives and mechanisms to encourage more investments to flow into plantation development must be set in place without putting in jeopardy the interests and welfare of the poor and the local communities who principally rely on the forests for their living. At a minimum, plantation development should create viable sources of livelihood for forest dependent communities to become instrumental to forest protection and law enforcement.

Poverty and equity impacts of the MFPCs

There is no empirical study currently available that provides conclusive evidence on the poverty and equity impacts of MFPCs. The scant information on MFPCs accomplishments also precludes the conduct of more comprehensive and fair assessment that can establish causal relationship between MFPCs' activities and their impacts on poverty and equity. However, a review of available information and key informant interviews with selected MFPC members in two regions in Luzon and Mindanao offer some insights on the matter in terms of providing some initial answers to the following relevant questions:

- To what degree did MFPCs tackle large-scale illegal loggers in the Philippines?
- What was the effect of MFPCs on the smaller operators?
- What are the opportunities for MFPC type entities to address the challenges posed by CBFM (what is their potential role in the future)?

Effects of MFPC operations on large-scale illegal loggers

It is difficult to establish the degree to which MFPCs tackled large scale illegal loggers in the Philippines, as opposed to the smaller operators, for at least three

reasons. First, available reports on the MFPCs' accomplishments at the DENR Central Office during the height of their operation between 1995 and 2001 do not make a distinction between large and small-scale illegal logging activities. The only way possible, based on the available records, is to categorise the violators based on the volume of logs confiscated.

Second, with the expiration and/or cancellation of most timber licence agreements, most of the heavy machinery used in large-scale operations is likely to have been disposed of. As shown in Table 1, the number of timber licence agreements (TLAs) was significantly reduced from 142 in 1986, covering a total area of 5.6 million ha, to only 19 in 2001, with a total area of 0.86 million ha. The same Table indicates a significant reduction in the volume of illegal logs/timber confiscated starting 1995 until 2001 during the height of MFPCs' operations, which has been interpreted as an indication of the success of MFPCs in helping stop the big illegal logging activities (Cruz and Tapia, 2005). However, it is also possible that the shift from large to small-scale logging operations may be partly attributed to the disposal of big logging machineries used for illegal logging activities and not solely to the intensified operations of the MFPCs.

Third, there has been a blurring of distinction between 'large-scale' and 'small-scale' illegal logging operations with the decline in the number of TLAs. As explained by one NGO representative to the MFPC in Region 2, some former large-scale illegal loggers have switched to financing the traditional small-scale operators who are directly involved in the cutting and hauling of logs from the forest. Since the two are now 'partners' in the same illegal logging activity, there is no longer a clear distinction between large and small-scale operations.

Despite these limitations in the evidence, experience on the ground indicates that MFPCs did, to a certain extent, make a contribution to dealing with the large-scale illegal logging activities perpetrated by economically well-off and oftentimes politically influential operators. In Region 2 for instance, two MFPC members noted that the Committee made no distinction between large and small-scale illegal operators in their enforcement of forest laws but were quite effective in addressing both. In the case of the large-scale operators, they claimed that the Regional MFPC was very instrumental in reducing the number of TLA holders in the region which were involved in illegal logging activities. A similar situation applies in some other regions where MFPCs used to be very active, especially in MFPC pilot areas.

While MFPCs to a limited degree were able to tackle large-scale illegal loggers, some MFPC members from the civil society sector also claimed that the 'big-fish' capitalised on their wealth and political connections to get away unscathed from their violations. An NGO representative in the provincial MFPC in Northern Luzon noted that large-scale illegal loggers are able to hire lawyers to defend themselves in court. They can also seek the assistance of unscrupulous politicians who intervene and manipulate the situation in their favour. Similarly, the CBFM PO Federation Head in a province

Table 1. Data on Timber Licence Agreements and illegal logging (1986-2001)

YEAR	Timber Licence Agreements (TLAs)			Illegal logging		
	Number	Total area ('000 ha)	Annual allowable cut ('000 cu m)	Confiscation (cu m)	Incidence	Magnitude (cu m/ incidence)
1986	142	5,675	8,231	20,000		
1987	137	5,404	8,204	45,039		
1988	110	4,421	4,421	60,877		
1989	99	4,259	6,315	107,000		
1990	75	2,812	4,730	84,601		
1991	69	2,625	4,601	73,998		
1992	61	2,315	1,760	65,583	262	250
1993	41	1,665	1,170	67,952	1,137	60
1994	37	1,575	945	35,045	927	38
1995	37	1,498	1,062	16,899	832	20
1996	35	1,462	988	24,994	2,224	11
1997	25	1,208	822	13,277	2,377	6
1998	20	934	506	8,655	1,344	6
1999	20	858	532	9,949	1,500	7
2000	19	864	698	9,864	891	11
2001*	19	864	212	10,862	557	20

* As of August 31, 2001

Note: 1986-1999 data came from the Yearly Annual Report of the DENR; Data on TLAs came from the 2002 Philippine Forestry Statistics.

in Mindanao alleged that large-scale illegal loggers are spared from being caught in their area because of their connivance with some DENR staff. Since the provincial MFPC was organised more than seven years ago, he is not aware of a single case where it had facilitated the conviction and punishment of large-scale illegal loggers known to operate in the area.

In general, it can be said that the degree to which MFPCs are able to deal with large-scale operators varies from place to place and is influenced by a number of factors. Such factors include political will, solidarity and commitment of MFPC members to enforce the law regardless of the violators; resources available to support their activities; and political, technical and moral support from the other sectors. The effectiveness of MFPCs is also influenced by the political power and resources available to the violators to resist MFPCs' efforts to enforce the law. In cases where wealthy violators have strong political support or where top-ranking politicians

themselves are involved in the illegal activities, MFPCs find it hard to perform their functions effectively.

Effect of MFPC operations on the small scale illegal loggers

With the recent trend from large to small-scale illegal logging operations, MFPCs have undoubtedly affected the smaller operators, probably more than the large-scale illegal loggers. In Region 2 for instance, the MFPC was instrumental in the 2003 cancellation of Resource Utilisation Permits (RUP)² issued to participating POs under the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program, due to their alleged violations of existing laws on timber harvesting. Similarly, NGO and PO leaders in Luzon and Mindanao both claimed that almost all of the apprehensions and legal suits filed in their respective provincial MFPCs and those convicted over the last five years involved small-scale operators. Most of them are upland farmers or shifting cultivators,

charcoal-makers, landless workers, or displaced workers of cancelled TLAs with very limited or no alternative sources of livelihood.

Nevertheless, the MFPCs can claim to have made a positive environmental contribution of in addressing small-scale illegal logging activities. However, they appear not to be as effective in addressing the poverty and equity concerns in forest protection. One of the general objectives of MFPCs is to support upland community development through alternative livelihood projects. However, some of the MFPC activities and accomplishments appear to have worked contrary to the attainment of this objective. For instance, the cancellation of RUPs in Region 2, while viewed by MFPC as a way to promote environmental conservation in the region, may have actually rendered life more difficult among CBFM participants who rely on timber utilisation to augment their meagre incomes. Findings from case studies on selected CBFM sites in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao funded through the National Forestry Program (NFP) Facility managed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations revealed that RUP cancellation had adverse socio-economic impacts on CBFM participants (IPC, 2004; Fernandez, Ang-Lopez and Defiesta, 2004; Pulhin, 2005). In the absence of alternative sources of livelihood, RUP cancellation may have in fact contributed to further forest degradation in some areas where communities are high dependent on forest resources. Similar experiences in different parts of the country indicate that despite the good intention to protect the forest, some MFPC accomplishments like apprehension of illegally cut timber or convicting an offender have made life more miserable for small-scale operators and their families who have very limited options to survive except to engage in illegal activities.

It is noteworthy to mention that there is an emerging trend among some of the active MFPCs to incorporate developmental activities in their regulatory function. In Region 2 for instance, MFPC member institutions like the Enterprise Works Worldwide-Philippines (EWW), and the Isabela State University ('ISU' – through its CVFED Program) have started assisting the CBFM holders through PO capability building, preparation of livelihood project proposals, and fund mobilisation to support livelihood activities. Similarly, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), the NGO representative to the Nueva Vizcaya provincial MFPC, is promoting charcoal briquette production in upland communities, especially in hotspot areas, as an alternative source of livelihood intended to divert the communities from illegal activities. In contrast to the traditional environmentally destructive approach of charcoal production which utilises forest tree species, charcoal briquette use alternative sources of raw materials such as bamboo, shrubs, twigs, coconut shells, leaves, cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), and other waste products to produce charcoal, hence it is more environment friendly (Baconguis, 2006).

Other active MFPCs in Mindanao have likewise attempted to address the poverty and equity dimension of forest protection. For instance, the provincial MFPC of Misamis Oriental in Region 10 assists its PO

members in the development of some projects including the provision of low-interest loans and introduction of garment-making as an alternative source of livelihood. In addition, the MFPC also helped to tap into the LGU and the local Congressional funds to support installation of a water system and purchase of solar batteries for the local communities. These supports, albeit insufficient, were nonetheless viewed by the PO leader to be very useful to the local community beneficiaries. It is also an important step towards defining a more responsive role for MFPCs that balances their regulatory and developmental functions.

Opportunities of MFPC type entities to address challenges posed by CBFM

The Philippine government adopted CBFM as the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice in the uplands through Executive Order (EO) No. 263 issued on 19 July 1995. Among CBFM's objectives are:

- To improve the socio-economic condition of the participating communities;
- Promote social justice and equitable access to and benefits from the forest resources including respecting the rights of indigenous peoples (IPs) to their ancestral domains;
- Effect sustainable development of forestlands resources;
- Protect and advance the right of Filipino people to a healthful environment.

It covers all areas classified as forestlands including allowable zones within protected areas.

In June 2004, the government further affirmed its support for the community-based approach in forest management through the promulgation of EO 318, enunciating community-based conservation and development as among the six guiding principles to promote sustainable forest management in the country and reiterated CBFM as the primary strategy in all forest conservation and development projects in the country. As of the middle of 2005, the CBFM covers some 5.97 million ha of forestland involving 1,577 POs and 690,691 households. Of these areas, 1,577 sites with a total area of 1.57 million ha are under the management of organised communities through the issuance of long-term CBFM Agreement (Bacalla, 2006). The rest of the project sites are under the auspices of the various 'people-oriented' forestry projects that the Philippine government has implemented involving a total of about 2.5 million ha that have been allocated to indigenous peoples (IPs) under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. The long term goal of the DENR is to place a total area of 9 million ha under CBFM by the year 2008.

At the core of the CBFM strategy is the provision of tenure security to participating POs through the issuance of CBFM Agreements (CBFMA). The CBFMA is an agreement entered between the government and the local community, represented by the People's Organisation, as forest managers, which has a term of twenty-five (25) years and renewable for another twenty-five (25) years. It gives its recipient communities the right to

occupy, possess, utilise and develop the forestlands and resources within the CBFMA area following the principles of sustainable forest management. One of the major responsibilities of the CBFM holders is to protect the entire forestlands within the CBFMA area against illegal logging and the unauthorised extraction of forest products, slash and burn agriculture and undertake other forest protection measures as may be necessary. CBFM holders are also expected to assist the government in the protection of forests adjacent to their area.

Despite its substantial accomplishments to date, key challenges remain to be hurdled in order to achieve the objectives of the CBFM program. Foremost of these challenges is the need to provide sustainable livelihood and related development services to participating communities to realise the CBFM's goal on sustainable forest management. As revealed by a number of assessment studies on CBFM, without sustainable livelihood, no amount of forest protection efforts against small-scale operators will suffice (Borlagdan, Guiang and Pulhin, 2001; Pulhin, 2005).

Considering that CBFM is likely to remain as the major long-term approach to sustainable forest management in the Philippines, the MFPC strategies should be harmonised with the overall CBFM approach for greater impacts and sustainability. Evidently, there are interesting opportunities for complementarity and synergy between the MFPC activities and those of the CBFM to enhance current forest protection efforts. Major areas for collaboration and complementarity between the two approaches include the following:

1. Promotion of sustainable livelihoods.

MFPCs could vigorously pursue their recent efforts to balance its regulatory functions with developmental activities through the promotion of viable and sustainable livelihood projects. Declared hotspots inhabited by poor communities could receive priorities from both MFPCs and CBFM in terms of providing alternative livelihood opportunities. This could be complemented by the provision of other basic social services such as farm to market roads, education and health facilities, water supply, electricity, and similar services.

2. Mobilising grassroots support to enhance current forest protection efforts.

The DENR does not have sufficient manpower and logistic support to do a more proactive work on forest protection. As a result, most DENR's forest protection personnel conduct patrol work in the highway when trees have already been cut instead of patrolling in the mountains to prevent the cutting of trees. This does not really solve the problem of forest destruction even if the violators are apprehended, since trees have been removed from the forest and cannot be immediately replaced. Considering this, MFPCs could mobilise grassroots support by recruiting CBFM participants in forest protection efforts. Policy on deputation of local communities as forest officers should be reviewed and strengthened to maximise the involvement of local communities in forest protection. Part of the policy strengthening could include the installation

of appropriate logistical support and incentive mechanisms to make the deputation process workable and sustainable. This strategy is based on the findings of Shah (2000), which revealed that the provision of financial and material incentives to local communities increases their level of participation and efficiency in forest protection activities while the absence of such incentives discouraged their involvement.

3. Networking and alliance building.

The multisectoral nature of MFPCs provides more opportunities to establish networks and build alliances with different sectors concerned on forest protection. MFPCs can contribute to CBFM by extending these opportunities for networking not only to PO representatives to the MFPC but also to other POs and communities involved in CBFM implementation.

4. Ensuring security of tenure.

A study on three approaches to decentralised forest protection in Region 5 seems to indicate that CBFM participants who are recipients of CBFMA are more effective in helping reduce the incidence of slash and burn cultivation, illegal logging, grazing and fire compared to two other groups without tenure security (Shah, 2000). MFPCs could therefore help facilitate the granting of tenure security in open access areas, especially where illegal activities are known to be very rampant.

5. Resource generation.

There is potential for the MFPCs to more aggressively pursue resource generation activities to support their operations, especially the provision of alternative livelihood projects to small-scale illegal operators. They might explore the possibility of retaining part of the fines from forest violations including a share from the disposal of apprehended forest products to help finance some of its developmental activities. The practical application of market-based schemes such as the payment for environmental services (PES) might also be explored as an alternative source of funds for livelihood development as well as forest protection and development.

Conclusion

MFPCs as a viable strategy for improving forest law enforcement in the Philippines

About two decades ago, timber harvesting in the country was dominated by big logging companies with TLAs. Because of this, forest law enforcement was focused on seeing that corporate logging concessionaires complied with the existing rules and regulations governing the actual logging operations and shipment of logs and other timber products. Since then, policy has shifted towards giving more equitable access to forest resources to local communities and individuals, and giving more weight to the protection of ecological functions of the forests. This is in response to the increasing deterioration of the forest ecosystems as a result of pressures from the growing population of communities dependent largely on the forests for their subsistence,

as well as the lack of substantial accomplishments in forest protection and law enforcement efforts by the government. The phasing out of TLAs in the early 90's and the institutionalisation of IFMA, SFMA and similar tenure instruments dramatically changed the landscape of forest management and utilisation. This paved the way for the increased involvement of communities and individuals in utilising forest resources. Community-based forest management and similar approaches are now more prominent than corporate logging and forest management. Consequently, forest law enforcement in the Philippines is now focused on monitoring community-based forest utilisation activities, though also monitoring the remaining TLAs.

Despite these changes in the focus of forest law enforcement, the major constraints to effective enforcement remain the same as when the TLA was the dominant tenure instruments issued to authorise timber harvesting. These are: inadequate capability of the government to enforce laws effectively, and inadequate programs to create a socioeconomic environment that is conducive for sustainable forest management. The gap between the limited resources (manpower and financial) available and the magnitude of activities required is plainly too large for law enforcement to be effective. The little available manpower the DENR has right now (approximately one forest guard for every 4,000 ha of forests to be covered) is constrained by insufficient logistical as well as legal support to motivate and empower the DENR field personnel for honest law enforcement. Under such conditions, monitoring of compliance with existing laws and regulations of forest resource users, particularly logging entities, easily succumbs to coercion if not to deliberate abuse. This is compounded by the slow pace of development programs to improve the economic conditions in the countryside to disentangle poor communities from heavy reliance on forest resources for their daily subsistence. Time and again the absence of adequate livelihood alternatives away from the forests has drawn people back into them and increased their dependency on harvesting timber and non-timber resources, usually under illegal terms and conditions.

Overcoming the obstacles to effective law enforcement in the Philippines will therefore require a two-pronged approach that enhances the existing capability of the government for law enforcement, and at the same time facilitates the improvement of the economic conditions of communities dependent on the forests through alternative livelihood development. It is in response to these needs that the MFPC approach was conceived and eventually implemented. In its original form, the MFPC was designed as a mechanism for enhancing forest protection and monitoring of illegal forest activities including illegal logging, and as a means of providing extension services to upland and lowland communities. It was to create greater opportunities for viable alternative sources of livelihood, thus reducing the reliance of the poor forest communities on illegal logging and similar activities (Cruz and Tapia, 2005). Experiences of the more than 300 MFPCs that were formed during the lifetime of the ENR-SECAL Project (roughly 1992-

1999) in forest protection and enforcement activities have varied. Some MFPCs were more successful than others, dependent largely on the amount of available financial and logistical resources for operation, the critical mass of individuals and organisations concerned with forest protection willing to participate in MFPC activities, and the level of support from local government units. At the height of the ENR-SECAL Project, the financial and technical support to MFPCs was most abundant. It was during this period that the MFPCs were most active and productive in terms of neutralising illegal logging activities. However, as the available resources for operation tapered off during the closing stages of the ENR-SECAL Project, the accomplishments of most MFPCs dramatically diminished.

Where there were strong advocates of forest protection in the civil society (particularly in civic and religious groups, media sector and NGOs) and in the local governments, MFPCs also flourished in their campaign against illegal logging. Real determination of the local government executives to enforce forest laws and regulations combined with the presence of active NGOs, media and religious groups were commonly observed in areas where MFPCs were most successful. These were most evident in the few areas where MFPCs survived the termination of technical and financial assistance upon the completion of ENR-SECAL. The MFPCs in Region 2 (North-eastern Luzon) and in Region 11 (Southern Mindanao) are good examples of MFPCs that continued to operate with support from member agencies (government and non-government) and individuals, post the ENR-SECAL era. In places where support from the civil society and the local government units was lethargic, MFPCs were noted to have limited accomplishments, even where they managed to survive.

In regard to delivering extension services to forest dependent communities and in helping create alternative livelihoods, experiences of MFPCs are quite few and isolated due mainly to the absence of financial resources that were supposed to fund related activities. There was a common recognition of the need to complement enforcement activities with alternative livelihood development, both to keep forest dependent communities out of the forests, and to cushion the effect of stopping illegal logging on the daily subsistence of small scale illegal loggers. However, very few MFPCs were able to provide meaningful assistance to affected communities in developing viable alternative sources of livelihood. Some MFPCs were able to assist communities to link up with providers of financial and technical assistance, so as to engage in non-forest based livelihoods. But in most places, MFPCs did not even have the resources to come up with the plan to improve the livelihoods of the local communities. As a result, the gains in stopping illegal logging operations and the transport of illegal forest products became difficult to sustain. A fundamental constraint was the absence of viable alternative livelihoods for the forest dependent communities.

The limited success of the majority of MFPCs notwithstanding, the potential of MFPCs as an effective law enforcement modality is strongly suggested by the

significant accomplishments of a few them. For as long as there is support from the civil society groups and the LGUs, this appears to be a strategy viable enough to make the DENR willing to reactivate MFPCs in select areas. Over the next 5 years, the DENR plans to re-commission up to 97 MFPCs across the country in order to boost its campaign against illegal logging and other similar offenses (DENR, 2005). The plan is likely to re-launch MFPC as monitors of logging operations, the transport of forest products and other forest management activities to promote compliance with existing rules and regulations. The MFPC will also likely serve as verifiers of proofs of legality of logging and similar harvesting activities, including shipment of harvested products. They could also assist in collecting evidence that will lead to the apprehension of forest law violators. The plan will also be to enable the MFPCs to provide assistance to local communities (both holders and non-holders of CBFMA) in looking for livelihood opportunities that are more viable than illegal forest product harvesting.

Given the potential roles of the MFPCs, the sustained support from the civil society, LGUs and DENR will remain to be the key factors to its effectiveness. The willingness and commitment of NGOs and other civic groups will still be critical to the reactivation of MFPC. The LGUs on the other hand will continue to provide the muscle and serve as the stabiliser of MFPC. For the DENR's part, the provision of technical assistance and some logistical support will be essential along with opening up easy access to maps, copies of certain legal documents and other information. The synchronous implementation of development programs in areas where the MFPCs will operate will most likely enhance the chances that illegal forest activities can be slowed down over the long term.

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Acronyms

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
BOC	Bureau of Customs
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CBFMA	Community-Based Forest Management Agreement
CENRO	Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer
CTA	Certificate of Transport Agreement
CLO	Certificate of Lumber Origin
COT	Certificate of Transshipment
CR	Certificate of Registration
CTO	Certificate of Timber Origin
DAO	Department Administrative Order
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ECC	Environmental Compliance Certificate
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EDSA	Epifanio delos Santos Avenue
EMB	Environmental Management Bureau
ENR-SECAL	Environment and Natural Resources Sectoral Adjustment Loan
EO	Executive Order
EWV	Enterprise Works Worldwide-Philippines
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FDC	Forestry Development Center
FMB	Forest Management Bureau
IAOP	Integrated Annual Operations Plan
IFMA	Integrated Forest Management Agreement
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
ISU	Isabela State University
LGUs	Local government units
MEC	Monitoring and Enforcement

MFPC	Component (of the ENR-SECAL) Multisectoral Forest Protection Committee
mcm	million cubic metres
NIPAS	National Integrated Protected Areas System
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSCB	National Statistics and Census Bureau
P	Philippines Peso (as of 5/2006; exchange rates were 50P= US\$1; 67P=€1)
PCBRMA	Protected Area Community-Based Resources Management Agreement
PD	Presidential Decree
PENRO	Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PNP	Philippine National Police
POs	People's Organisations
PPA	Philippine Port Authority
PRRM	Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
PWPA	Philippine Wood Producers Association
RED	Regional Executive Director of DENR
RUP	Resource Utilisation Permit
SIFMA	Socialised Integrated Forest Management Agreement
TLA	Timber Licence Agreement
TMO	Timber Management Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WPP	Wood Processing Plant Permit

Footnotes

- ¹Six in Luzon, six in Mindanao and three in the Visayas.
- ²RUP allows the participating POs to conduct small-scale timber harvesting in a designated area following the principle of sustainable forest management.

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