

Policy Reforms and Innovations
on Community Forestry:
Philippine Experience

Years of Reform: 1995-98

- Turned over 2.5 million ha. of forestlands to Indigenous Peoples
- Increased ratio of forestlands under IPs
- Definite shift from corporate logging to community forestry
- Passage of Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
- Purpose of this presentation: Show how gains achieved and how to move ahead

The Philippine IPs

- IPs comprise less than 10% (6.5 million) of the Philippine population of 78 million
- Most of them live in the uplands, which accounts for half of the total land area of 30 million ha.
- 25 million people live in the uplands
- Uplands - most fragile Philippine ecosystem

The Philippine Forest

- 100 years ago, 70% of the land was forest
- Today, only 18.3% or 5.5 million ha. has forest cover.
- Primary forest: 804,000 ha.
- Mossy: 1,040,000 ha.
- Pine: 227,000 ha.
- Logged over: 2,731,000 ha.
- Degraded: 2,200,000

Policy Reforms: 1987-97

- 1987: Revised Constitution to allow shift from corporate logging
- 1991: Local Government Code
- 1992: National Integrated Areas System (NIPAS) - 4.6 million ha. Protected
- 1995: EO 263 adopts CBFM as strategy
- 1997: Indigenous Peoples Rights Act

Policies and Innovations to move forward

- **Poverty reduction:** Break down the culture of poverty thru community organizing
- **Capacity to do business:** Current livelihood systems too basic. Forest communities should produce higher value products.

Policies and Innovations to move forward

- **Market forces:** Shift dependence from government budgets to market-based instruments.
- **Bureaucracy:** Cut out the stranglehold of bureaucracy thru use of technology.

Conclusion

- To gain rights for the indigenous peoples, we must be sensitive to the ebb and flow in public life. There are times when reforms are possible, other times when gains may be lost. When the timing is right, move for a comprehensive blueprint for action and nurture it to its definitive completion.