

Declaration of Commitment to Policy Action on Water and Sanitation
17 March 2011
House of Representatives

1. We, the members of the executive and legislative branches of the Philippine government, local government units, stakeholders from the private sector and members of the community, have gathered at the House of Representatives, Constitution Hills, Quezon City, Philippines on 17 March 2011, to affirm our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and to the global effort to realize "Sustainable Sanitation: The Five-Year-Drive to 2015" and assure the Filipino people of equitable and sustainable access to water resources and sanitation.
2. We acknowledge that access to water and sanitation is a basic human right that is unevenly shared. Thus, only through broad and shared efforts can we attain the universal and equitable access to water supply and sanitation services.
3. We recognize that water is a natural finite resource which calls for the need to safeguard the environment. Yet, we are encumbered by the decline in water quality and degradation of watershed areas.
4. We uphold the principles of equality, intergenerational equity, alignment, harmonization, transparency, mutual accountability, sustainability, affordability, and participation. Thereby, we have the imperative duty to the Filipino people especially the most vulnerable, in particular, women and children of the informal sector and the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) who have been constantly overlooked and marginalized.
5. We commit to a collaborative effort in achieving the following goals:
 - a.provision of potable water supply and sanitation services to all areas in the country;
 - b.improvement of the regulation and management of water and sanitation services;
 - c.improvement of the quality of services offered by Water Service Providers (WSPs); and
 - d.equitable and sustainable distribution of water resources and sanitation services;
6. We resolve to translate these shared principles and goals into policy actions with a steadfast commitment and expediency for their realization:
 - a.On Water Resource Management:
 1. For the Executive branch, we commit to:
 - strict enforcement and implementation of legislations related to water, sanitation and the protection of the environment such as the "The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004" (RA No. 9275) and "An Act Providing for the Construction of Water Wells, Rainwater Collectors, Development of Springs and Rehabilitation of Existing Water Wells in all Barangays in the Philippines" (RA No. 6716);
 - ensure monitoring and compliance to water quality standards;
 - ensure the protection and immediate rehabilitation and restoration of watersheds;
 - strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) on water resource management and regulation;
 - streamline and consolidate overlapping and fragmented functions of involved agencies;
 - ensure a sustainable budget allocation and provide support to the enactment of pending legislation which advocate improvements in water supply accessibility and sanitation services;

- to support, empower and strengthen alliances with all local government units (LGUs), urban and rural communities and WSPs in accordance with the principles cited in this declaration; and
- strengthen the inter-agency and multi-sectoral initiatives including monitoring, regulation and evaluation of existing water resources and sanitation services within a short-term and long-term time frame.

2. For the Legislative branch, we commit to:

- review and update the Water Code of the Philippines;
- ensure funding for the implementation of enacted laws and policies on water and sanitation services and other relevant laws; and
- introduce a water-pricing policy that complements the need for recovering realistic economic costs while ensuring the equitable access to water services

b. On Economic Regulation:

1. For the Executive branch, we commit to:

- explore various schemes on setting consumer prices and tariffs on water and sanitation services such as socialized payment options; and
- practice transparency through public information and consultation especially on activities involving tariff setting.

2. For the Legislative branch, we commit to:

- form a joint oversight committee of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Executive Branch to examine the various dimensions of the water and sanitation sector. In the long term, an apex body should be created through legislation to ensure effective leadership over water and sanitation sector.

3. For the private sector, we commit to:

- a balanced partnership with the government in ensuring the sustainable provision of water and sanitation services; and
- subscribe to public accountability.

c. On Water Supply for the Poor

1. For the Executive branch, we commit to:

- integrate water and sanitation concerns in anti-poverty initiatives and start up piloting in areas toward a five-year drive for sustainable sanitation; and
- re-examine and improve the enabling environment for Public-Private Partnership

2. For the Legislative branch, we commit to:

- pass legislations that will require service providers to extend their services to poor areas

3. For the private sector and community, we commit to:

- initiate partnerships with the government aimed at providing affordable, and available water and sanitation services, and
- expand the coverage of water supply and sanitation services in poor areas

7. We solemnly affirm that we will seek to realize our aspirations for an equitable and sustainable policy action to improve the access to water supply and sanitation. We therefore pledge our unwavering support for these shared principles and initiatives and our resolve to achieve them.

