

**CAGAYAN VALLEY DECLARATION ON
LOCAL WATER GOVERNANCE
DECEMBER 2010**

We, the delegates to the Local Water Governance Forum in Cagayan Valley, recognize that access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right enjoyable by all regardless of creed, ethnicity, age and gender; that water is a crucial resource that is fast becoming scarce, and that should be systematically, properly, locally, and indigenously managed for the good and benefit of the members of the community; that genuine water security can only be guaranteed through the participation of all stakeholders; and that safe and clean drinking water will remain a dream for many if water resources remains to be poorly managed and the current culture of passivity and wastefulness continue to persist, do hereby acknowledge the following that:

1. Inadequate water supply prevails in the region due to depletion of forest reserves and degradation of watershed areas caused by continuous migration in the up-land, slashing and burning of forest covers, unsustainable farming practices, timber poaching and charcoal making.
2. Quality of water supply remains generally poor due to source contamination, leaking distribution systems, lack of appropriate sewerage treatment facilities, inconsistent application of water safety standards, and popularity of open-dug wells.
3. Many communities, especially those of Indigenous People's and coastal areas have yet to enjoy sustained access to safe and clean drinking water due to absence of water resource mapping.
4. Scarcity of water, particularly during dry season, is becoming ever more intense and prevalent as a result of Climate Change.
5. Community members and some Local Chief Executives (LCE) continue to be passive towards Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) due to weak or lack of intensified and locally-driven Information, Education and Communication (IEC) program on Water and Sanitation (WATSAN).
6. Absence of technical support system for LGUs and lack of consultation with community claim holders result in poorly designed water supply systems.
7. Indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups continue to be left out in the consultation process for watershed protection initiatives and the development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).
8. Insufficient allocation of funds continues to hamper efforts for watershed protection (i.e. engagement of community members as forest protection volunteers) and construction, maintenance, and expansion of water supply facilities.

In light of the foregoing, we, mutually supporting each other for the advancement of a noble goal of promoting a responsive water security and governance in Cagayan Valley (Region 02), do hereby declare our commitment to:

Support capability building on technical requirements for more appropriate water supply design and construction, and for this purpose, local government units commit part of the resources in building their technical and organizational capabilities to manage water supply systems and in partnership with the academe and other stakeholders shall endeavor to conduct baseline research and develop technical inventory of water sources leading to more effective intervention at the grassroots level;

Adopt and sustain a culture of care and conservation, provide mutual aid for the protection of water sources as a common natural resource, push for the development of an academic curriculum that includes water conservation and environmental protection; and, among others, extend technical and financial support for upland farmers to provide them with alternative to unsustainable farming practices;

Fund programs, projects, and activities designed to promote sustainable and adequate supply and access to potable water for the poor, most especially those intended for indigenous communities; for this purpose, LGUs shall set aside a reasonable amount from their 20% development fund for water supply security, call on Department of Finance (DOF) and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to amend the National Government-Local Government Unit cost-sharing arrangement by using access/coverage as basis for the percentage of sharing in lieu of income classification; for Water Service Providers (WSPs) to improve and expand their areas of operation or service areas; and other national and local NGOs and people's organizations shall encourage each other by searching, promoting and providing funds for and incentives to good local water practices;

Ensure coordinated and systematic efforts among Local Government Units and local water stakeholders to come up with a community-responsive Local Water Code that effectively caters to the unique needs and requirements of their localities and pushes for the inclusion of the academe, Indigenous Peoples groups as part of the Water and Sanitation Council, as a step towards institutionalizing public-academe partnership in undertaking WATSAN activities;

Work on the adoption of the Integrated Water Resource Management plan by LGUs that emphasizes capacity and institutional building, water source protection, reforestation and solid waste management; this may include partnering with and convincing donor countries and agencies to extend technical and financial assistance to LGUs in establishing water supply systems in poor communities;

Achieve the following objectives and doable targets for Line Government Agencies (LGAs): for CHED to: 1) recommend to Congress the enactment of a law integrating watershed management in Social Science subjects and NTSP to 2) to issue a CMO mandating HEIs to require NSTP students to plant trees in watershed areas in order to complete the course; 3) to integrate water resource management in HEIs priority research agenda; for COA, DENR and DBM to streamline the release of funds for watershed protection to fast track the release of funds to end-users; for DILG to provide technical assistance to LGUs in the formulation of a responsive local water ordinance appropriate to needs of LGUs; for Congress to revise the national water code and integrate present day realities issues and concerns and to require LGUs to allocate funds for water supply and sanitation; the DOH to train and capacitate the MHOs in conducting laboratory tests to ensure quality safe drinking water; for PIA and DENR to institutionalize the production and distribution of local IEC materials to all stakeholders including values development materials to motivate people in supporting forest protection;

Train members of local communities, in collaboration and synergy of efforts with different stakeholders for the protection of water resources leading to institutionalization of sustainable livelihood programs that is responsive to their needs; these may include, among others, integrated farming systems, agro-forestry programs and other modern and accepted agricultural technologies that avoid forest denudation, and water source degradation; training, deputation and harnessing of the Bantay-Gubat program of the DENR with funds to be appropriated by the DENR, LGU and NGOs in the area;

Establish a working network of water stakeholders, which shall, among its many functions, push for the signing of a memorandum of agreement among DENR, LGU, NCIP, and DILG that delineates and defines institutional roles and responsibilities and points of convergence on watershed management and ask congress for the passage of the law converting the present NWRB to become the National Water Resource Commission that would constitute a single agency to monitor, regulate, and evaluate the provision and sustainability of safe drinking water for the people;

Reach out to all sectors of society and encourage all to embrace the advocacy for safe drinking water, to take part in local participatory management and governance that promotes safe water for all; and for everyone to actively seek and empower each other so that all may be given the opportunity to participate in building a future where potable water is accessible even to the poorest.

FOR EVERY FILIPINO who holds that water is a human right; we affix our signature hereinto on this 14th day of December, 2010 at Cagayan State University, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Province.

