

**NORTHERN MINDANAO
LOCAL WATER GOVERNANCE DECLARATION
NOVEMBER 2010**

We the delegates to the "Northern Mindanao Local Water Governance Forum," representing local government units (LGUs), regional offices of national government agencies, academe, water service providers, civil society groups, the church, and concerned individuals:

Recognize that while the Philippines is on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half the number of proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, accelerated and targeted efforts are still needed to bring drinking water to all rural households in the country. As such, provision of safe water supply in the countryside, especially to the poor and those disadvantaged by distance, remains a challenge.

Acknowledge that although Northern Mindanao has abundance of water sources, there are still municipalities that remain "waterless" as many people continue to lack access to potable water because of mismanaged watersheds, contaminated sources from mining activities, commercial and agricultural plantations and domestic practices.

Accept that despite the efforts of various groups and organizations to increase availability of safe drinking water for all; access by the poor remains difficult due to financial constraints, limited private-public engagement in, and inadequate funding and low prioritization given by national and local governments for the establishment and improvement of local water supply system facilities.

Admit that quality of drinking water in the region continues to degrade; that unsafe drinking water has serious impacts on public health; that low level of community awareness on sustainable water and sanitation practices persists; and that operation of community-based water system in many areas remains to be unsustainable due to patronage politics and limited technical capacity of LGU personnel.

Realize the need to continue previous and existing initiatives proven to be effective in bringing safe and clean drinking water to the poor; consolidate stakeholder efforts in the next years; renew commitments and reinvigorate efforts to finally achieve the MDG on drinking water; build on initial gains and existing organization networks in the region; propose measures that take into account the close linkage of water source pollution with other environmental and social problems such as climate change, solid waste, deforestation, unbridled development, and poverty.

Do hereby commit to honoring the right of every Filipino to clean and safe drinking water as declared by the United Nations and supported by the Philippine Government:

- Recognize our common responsibility to take care of the environment;
- Believe that open, transparent and peaceful dialogue can effect real change;
- Align activities that increase access by the poor in Northern Mindanao to safe and clean drinking water;

Thereby declare the following commitments and call-for-actions:

We call on National Government to:

- Give utmost priority in establishing and improving water and sanitation.
- To involve stakeholders, including the Indigenous Peoples in the consultation process

We call on academic and research institutions and sustainable water and sanitation alliances for appropriate technologies on sanitation and water resource management.

We call on our senators and district representatives to give priority in allocating funds for water and sanitation projects.

We urge DILG and LWUA to intensify efforts in building the capability of local water service providers.

We call on DENR, NCIP and LGUs to impose policies regulating mining and logging activities in the Region and protect our water sources.

We further call on relevant organizations to regularly report their progress; and, to disseminate these M&E reports; as well as to urge other government agencies, organizations, sectors, communities, and individuals to sign this Declaration and implement their own sector/area-specific plans on Local Water Governance actions.

As Local Chief Executives,

We commit to support water and sanitation programs by localizing and implementing policies on solid waste management, sanitation, watershed protection and rehabilitation and enforcing environmental laws.

We commit to integrate water and sanitation into the Medium Term Development Plan and Annual Investment plan to ensure implementation of sustainability of the programs.

We commit to intensify school to school campaign on solid waste management and water and sanitation.

As for the Civil Society Organizations,

We commit to support the implementation of the water and sanitation programs, and continue to respond to the call for effective management of our water resources.

We further commit to organize ourselves into a multi-stakeholder network that would continue and ceaselessly work for the improvement of water supply services and facilities in Northern Mindanao; to do monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the commitments and recommendations declared herein to.

So declared and signed at Cagayan De Oro City this November 26, 2010.

