

Philippine Forestry in the Era of Contradicting Policies

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Flawed Logic in Natural Resource Utilization and Management

- In 2011, after the flooding that hit several areas in Mindanao, the government declared a total log ban through E.O. 23. The ban sought to stop illegal logging. As a result legal logging operations stopped; illegal logging continued on a wider scale.
- The government wanted to protect the forests. It stopped logging, but mining companies were allowed to operate even in residual forests (dipterocarp forests) and sub-marginal* forests and even in proclaimed watershed forest reserves.

* tropical rain forest dominated by Leguminose and lesser utilized species, mainly restricted to shallow and successively drained limestone soils.



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DEFORESTATION

- Deforestation is defined as the conversion of forested areas to non-forest land use such as arable land, urban use, logged area or wasteland. According to FAO, it is the conversion of forest to another land use or the long-term reduction of the canopy cover below the 10 percent threshold (Tejaswi, 2007).
- Logging per se does not result to deforestation.



The SUDECOR Experience



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From the **Food and Agriculture Office Website**

Location:	Surigao del Sur Province, Philippines
Area:	75 671 hectares
Managing entity:	Surigao Development Corp.
Management objective:	Sustainable wood production

SUDECOR has been implementing sound forest management and development practices for more than 40 years. The concessionaire maintains one of the best growing stocks of naturally regenerated dipterocarp forests in the Philippines. By closely adhering to prescribed forestry laws, rules and regulations, SUDECOR has been able to maintain a green mantle of tropical forest vegetation, which covers approximately 92 percent of the concession. The company has adapted to the 1992 government policy banning logging of old-growth forests, and has maintained profitability by harvesting well-stocked secondary forests, under careful silvicultural prescriptions. The concession was chosen as an experimental site for special foreign-assisted research projects during the last decade and has also hosted field observations and study tours.

In search of excellence: exemplary forest management in Asia and the Pacific...

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“The SUDECOR concession area is a living testimony to the reality of sustainable forest resources amid development..... It demonstrates that the forest has astounding ability to regenerate itself after certain degrees of perturbations only if a committed and conscientious forest management sustains the flow of goods and services from the forest to society..... The SUDECOR concession area affirms the soundness of selective logging system once properly implemented..”

“The conservation of biodiversity together with soil, water and other forest resources and processes can be compatible to great lengths with many of our socioeconomic development objectives..... The SUDECOR forest concession area does not only match but in many respects outshines the other forests. It has splendid stands of dipterocarps and other timber species along with non-timber plants. Despite having been logged twice already, the diversity seems to have remained at almost the pre-logging state.”

DR. REX VICTOR O. CRUZ – Professor, UPLB CFNR & Noted Watershed Expert



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“SUDECOR’s forest concession had been managed very well. Their reforestation projects promoted refuge for many wildlife species. Their strict protection measures had practically excluded poachers. At the end, they were able to maintain good populations of wild animals within the forest. If only SUDECOR’s experience could be applied and multiplied in other forest concessions of the country, only then can we be assured that biodiversity, in particular animal wildlife, will be taken care of.”

**DR. Roberto P. Rubio – Professor, UPLB
CFNR & Zoology Expert**



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Land Use and Vegetative Cover inside the Concession

Vegetation/Land Use	Area (ha)	Percent of Total
Alienable and Disposable Lands	1,581	2.09
Brushlands	6,588	8.71
Dipt. Forest – High Volume	8,141	10.76
Dipt. Forest- Medium Volume	17,246	22.79
Dipt. Forest – Low Volume	26,306	34.76
Dipt. Forest – Virgin	2,869	3.79
Mossy Forest	2,036	2.69
Openlands	3,851	5.09
Plantation	3,825	5.06
Sub-Marginal Forest	3,228	4.26
TOTAL	75,671	100

Comprehensive Development Management Plan, 2010

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The pictures in this slide were taken last May 2010

SUDECOR manages one of the best forest concessions in the country today with more than 90% forested area based on Satellite Spot Image

Production Zone – 51,479 hectares or 68% adequately stocked production zone. However, only 36,216 hectares are considered operable residual forest where logging operations can be undertaken.

Protection Zone – 24,192 hectares or 32% of the total forest concession



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Based on the Philippine Selective Logging System, SUDECOR crafted its Sustainable Forest Management Plan with the following terms:

Annual Allowable Cutting Area is only 1,035 hectares

Only 10-20 matured trees per hectare reaching merchantable sizes of at least 60 cm in diameter at breast height can be harvested

Only 65,770 cubic meters of timber are allowed to be cut per year

SUDECOR adopted the 35-year cutting cycle (harvesting in a particular area can only be done every 35 years)



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- **The CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT WAS TESTED AT THE SUDECOR FOREST CONCESSION.**
- **Several foreign-assisted projects and studies were conducted inside the forest concession, including the bio-diversity study conducted by a composite of experts from UPLB under a grant by the International Tropical Timber Organization of the United Nations**



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- **When the log ban was enforced beginning February 2011, SUDECOR was forced to shutdown its operations, and retaining only a skeletal force to undertake minimum compliance to IFMA conditionalities**
- **Since then, illegal logging became widespread and massive; extracting an average of 160,000 board feet per month (based on reported cases by concession guards and IP groups)**
- **Kaingin has also expanded more aggressively, converting timberlands into agri lands**



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- **In many instances, areas covered by the National Greening Program were also subjected to kaingin, thus destroying residual forests and even old growth forests, only to be planted with Falcatta and other tree crops**
- **The log ban has led to more losses in forest cover**
- **Without a mechanism for sustainable forest management, the Philippines will lose many things, including watersheds, biodiversity and others**



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- If the direction of the government is merely to plant trees (with emphasis on tree crops such as falcatta, and agro-forestry such as cacao and coffee), biodiversity will be seriously undermined.
- Maintaining our dipterocarp forest (mostly classified as old growth and residual forests) as well as our mossy forests (protected zone) is critical to keeping a biologically diverse forest eco-system. Thus, the issue is not only the quantity (expanse and density) but the quality of the forest that make up the forest cover.



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