



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6881

BY REPRESENTATIVES GARIN (S.), ANGARA, AUMENTADO, HERRERA-DY, ALCOVER, ALVAREZ (M.), CABALUNA, CANONIGO, CATAMCO, DEFENSOR, GO (A.), JAVIER, LICO, MENDOZA (J.), MENDOZA (R.), MIRAFLORES, NAVA, PANGANDAMAN (M.), PANGANDAMAN (S.), RIVERA, TREÑAS, TY, YU, ZUBIRI, BATOCABE AND GUANLAO, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2660

AN ACT PROMOTING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGIES AND APPROACHES FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Soil and
2 Water Conservation Act of 2013”.

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the
4 State to promote and support soil and water conservation technologies and
5 approaches through the development, promotion and implementation of soil
6 and water conservation measures and practices including rainwater harvesting
7 to enhance decision-making, planning and potential upscaling of good
8 practices. Towards this end, the State shall support Sustainable Land
9 Management (SLM) programs for livelihood improvement particularly of
10 upland farmers and indigenous people, and for the prevention of land
11 degradation and protection of the environment and natural resource base.

1 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following
2 terms are defined as follows:

3 (a) *Land degradation* refers to the reduction or loss of the biological
4 or economic productivity and complexity or rain-fed cropland, irrigated
5 cropland, range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land use or from
6 processes or combination of processes arising from human activities and
7 habitation pattern such as (1) soil erosion caused by wind and/or water;
8 (2) deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic
9 properties of soils; and (3) long-term loss of natural vegetation.

10 (b) *Organic agriculture* refers to production system that sustains the
11 health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes,
12 biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions rather than the use
13 of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition,
14 innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and to promote fair
15 relationship and good quality of life for all involved.

16 (c) *Rain-fed area* refers to an area not served by any irrigation facilities
17 and mainly relies on rainfall for crop and animal production.

18 (d) *Rainwater harvesting system* refers to a system that collects,
19 accumulates and stores rainwater and surface runoff for purposes of
20 supplemental irrigation, inland fish production and other agricultural purposes.
21 For the purpose of this Act, small-scale rainwater harvesting system refers to
22 reservoir storage facilities with a height of not less than five (5) meters and a
23 surface area of not more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) square
24 meters.

25 (e) *Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT)* refers to a simple,
26 applicable, low-cost method of upland farming which consists of alley farming
27 in which field and perennial crops are grown in bands four to five (4-5) meters
28 wide between contoured rows of leguminous trees and shrubs.

1 (f) *Soil and water conservation technologies* refer to measures that
2 control soil and water degradation and enhance productivity in the field.

3 (g) *Soil and water conservation approaches* refer to ways and means of
4 support that help to introduce, implement, adapt and apply soil and water
5 conservation technologies in the field.

6 (h) *Soil and Water Conservation Guided Farm (SWCGF)* refers to a
7 farm established to showcase appropriate soil and water conservation
8 technologies for possible replication and upscaling. It is also an approach that
9 facilitates the proper implementation of soil and water conservation
10 technologies through the provision of technical assistance in the field survey,
11 soil and water conservation farm planning, and implementation of the plan.

12 (i) *Soil and Water Conservation Farm Plan* refers to a plan that
13 considers the right mix of farm enterprises and appropriate soil and water
14 conservation technologies, which is formulated with reference to existing
15 biophysical and socioeconomic conditions of the farm and in consultation with
16 farmer-cooperators.

17 (j) *Soil conservation* refers to the management of soil to prevent or
18 reduce soil erosion and depletion by wind and water.

19 (k) *Sustainable Land Management (SLM)* refers to the use of land
20 resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, for the production of
21 goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the
22 long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their
23 environmental functions.

24 (l) *Upland* refers to the extensive portion of land located within
25 one hundred to five hundred (100-500) meters above sea level (masl) with
26 slope of less than eighteen percent (18%).

27 (m) *Water conservation* refers to the protection, development and
28 efficient management of water resources for beneficial purposes.

(n) *Watershed* refers to a land area drained by a stream or fixed body of water and its tributaries having common outlet for surface runoff. This includes small watershed with an area of ten thousand (10,000) hectares and below; medium-scale watershed with an area of more than ten thousand (10,000) to fifty thousand (50,000) hectares; and large-scale watershed with an area of fifty thousand (50,000) hectares and above.

(o) *Watershed management* refers to the process of guiding and organizing land and other resource uses in a watershed to provide desired goods and services without adversely affecting soil, water and other natural resources.

(p) *Watershed protection* refers to a management strategy to control soil erosion and prevent illegal cutting of vegetations and other land degrading activities in the watershed.

SEC. 4. *The National Soil and Water Conservation Program.* – In order to address the problem of land degradation which affects the state and management of our natural resources, a National Soil and Water Conservation Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, is hereby established. The Program shall foment synergies between agricultural productivity improvement and sustainable land management through the promotion and implementation of soil and water conservation technologies and approaches.

The Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), in consultation with concerned agencies and other stakeholders, shall prepare the Program, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA). Upon implementation of this Act, the BSWM shall submit an Annual Report and Progress Report, as may be required, within five (5) years to the Secretary of the DA for review and assessment.

SEC. 5. *Goals and Objectives.* – Pursuant to the above declaration, the Program shall support the implementation of SLM projects for livelihood

improvement and prevention of land degradation in the uplands. As such, it adopts the following specific objectives:

(a) To establish one thousand (1,000) SWCGF within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act to showcase sustainable land management best practices such as, but not limited to, SALT, organic-based agriculture, farm waste and residue management, wastewater recycling and reuse, rainwater harvesting or combination of two (2) or more of these practices including approaches to implement these practices;

(b) To establish ten thousand (10,000) units of small-scale rainwater harvesting systems consisting of rainwater reservoir development, watershed management and service area development in strategic upland areas throughout the country within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act; and

(c) To capacitate and empower local government units (LGUs) and farmers associations in the implementation and operationalization and maintenance of soil and water conservation model farms and rainwater harvesting systems.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Agency.* – The DA, through the BSWM and the DA-Regional Field Units (DA-RFUs), shall provide the technical and administrative support in the implementation of the Program and all other policies and objectives of this Act, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Secretary of the DA.

SEC. 7. *Farmers Associations.* – Farmer-cooperators and program recipients shall be organized into associations and/or cooperatives and shall be capacitated on soil and water conservation. As such, the BSWM and the DA-RFUs, in coordination with concerned LGUs, shall provide trainings on soil and water conservation and shall assist them in accessing available credit windows to sustain the operation and maintenance of soil and water conservation facilities to be established.

The BSWM and the DA-RFUs, in coordination with concerned LGUs, shall assist and facilitate the registration of such associations and/or cooperatives for purposes of participation in the National Soil and Water Conservation Program: *Provided*, That the farmers shall select their leaders in accordance with the constitution and bylaws that they will formulate and firm up.

SEC. 8. *Soil and Water Conservation Guided Farms.* – Soil and Water Conservation Guided Farms (SWCGF) shall serve as model farms that will showcase soil and water conservation approaches and technologies in the uplands. These will provide a multiplier effect by encouraging other farmers to engage in soil and water conservation. For this purpose, SWCGF shall be established in cluster within high impact areas such as watersheds.

Potential sites shall be identified and selected using approved site selection criteria, in coordination with concerned LGUs and farmers associations. Selected sites shall be subjected to various field surveys, biophysical characterization and socioeconomic profiling as inputs in the preparation of Soil and Water Conservation Farm Plan: *Provided*, That it shall be prepared in consultation with the farmers based on the sites' biophysical characteristics, market potential of crops to be produced, and the capability and resources of farmer-cooperators to manage the farm. The SWCGF shall be established in accordance with the Soil and Water Conservation Farm Plan, farmers' capabilities and preferences, and available resources.

The concerned LGUs, through the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist, shall provide agriculture support and services to the farmer-cooperators of SWCGF to ensure its sustainability and facilitate broader adoption by more farmers within a locality.

SEC. 9. *Small-scale Rainwater Harvesting Structures.* – Small-scale rainwater harvesting structures shall be designed and established in cluster to

1 store rainwater and surface runoff within a watershed. Potential sites shall be
2 identified and selected using approved site selection criteria in coordination
3 with concerned LGUs and farmers associations. Selected sites shall
4 be subjected to various field surveys, biophysical characterization and
5 socioeconomic profiling. The small-scale rainwater harvesting structures shall
6 be implemented in accordance with the approved engineering plans and
7 designs, and field distribution which shall be prepared by concerned LGUs
8 with technical assistance from the BSWM and the DA-RFUs.

9 The BSWM shall turn over the small-scale rainwater harvesting
10 structures to the concerned LGUs wherein said structures are located. Subject
11 to the requirements to be set by the BSWM, the LGU shall accordingly entrust
12 and delegate the operation and maintenance of structures to duly organized
13 farmers associations as recipients.

14 Appropriate cropping pattern and calendar that will optimize the use of
15 stored rainwater shall be prepared by farmers with technical assistance from
16 the LGUs through the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist.

17 *SEC. 10. Research, Development and Extension Services.* – Research
18 and development and extension on soil and water conservation shall be an
19 important component of the Program to provide a dynamic technology
20 development, information dissemination and extension support in the
21 implementation of the Program. Research and development shall cover, but
22 not limited to, the following areas: rainwater harvesting design methods,
23 runoff management technologies, soil moisture conservation impacts and
24 groundwater recharge enhancement.

25 The BSWM, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and the
26 Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of the DA; the Ecosystem Research and
27 Development Bureau (ERDB) of the Department of Environment and Natural
28 Resources (DENR); and concerned state universities and colleges (SUCs),

1 through proper and appropriate institutional arrangements, shall provide
2 technical support and assistance in the conduct of research and development
3 and in the provision of extension services on soil and water conservation to
4 LGUs and farmers associations and cooperatives.

5 The BSWM and the ATI are further directed to assist the LGUs in the
6 conduct of trainings for beneficiaries and/or cooperators of SWCGF and
7 small-scale rainwater harvesting systems prior to operation and/or turnover of
8 said facilities.

9 SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of
10 Agriculture and the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in consultation
11 with other concerned agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the
12 necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

13 SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial
14 implementation of this Act shall be charged to the budget of the Department of
15 Agriculture under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such
16 sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in
17 the annual General Appropriations Act.

18 SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any of the provisions of this Act is
19 declared invalid, the other provisions which are not affected thereby shall
20 remain to be in full force and effect.

21 SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws or parts thereof, decrees,
22 orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
23 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

24 SEC. 15. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
25 days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2)
26 newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,