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Republic of the Philippines
Palawan Council for Sustainable Development
(R.A. 7611)
Puerto Princessa City, Palawan

Excerpts from the Minutes of the 26th Council Meeting of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development held at Rita Island, Ulugan Bay, Puerto Princessa City, 27 May 1994.

Present:

Gov. Salvador P. Socrates	-	Chairman
Exec. Dir. Arthur R. Ventura	-	Secretary
Cong. Alfredo E. Abueg Jr.	-	Member
Dep. Dir. Gen. Aniceto Sobrepena	-	Member
Mayor Wenceslao de las Alas	-	Member
Kgd. Rodolfo C. Flordeliza	-	Member
Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn	-	Member
Rev. Fr. Armando R. Limsa	-	Member
Mr. Vic Milan	-	Member
Vice-Gov. Joel T. Reyes	-	Member
Brig. Gen. Carlos F. Tanega	-	Member
Mr. Leopoldo Felisarte representing Cong. David A. Ponce de Leon	-	Member
REN Wilfredo Pollicco representing Usec. Ricardo M. Umali	-	Member
Mr. Roberto Garcellano representing Maj. Crispiniano G. Acosta Jr.	-	Member

Absent:

Cong. David A. Ponce de Leon	-	Vice-Chairman
Usec. Joemari D. Gerochi	-	Member
Usec. Ricardo M. Umali	-	Member
Maj. Crispiniano G. Acosta Jr.	-	Member
Atty. Teodoro Q. Pena	-	Member

PCSD RESOLUTION NO. 94-50

RESOLUTION REQUESTING HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS TO REVIEW AND IF POSSIBLE REVERSE THE EFFECTIVITY OF FAO NO. 190 ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ALLOWING "PA-ALING" FISHING IN SOUTH CHINA SEA AND SULU SEA

WHEREAS, R.A. 7611, otherwise known as the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan, took effect on June 19, 1992 and Sections 4 and 6 of said Act provide that the SEP for Palawan shall serve as the comprehensive framework to guide the local government of Palawan and the government agencies concerned in the formulation and implementation of plans, programs and projects affecting the Province including its environment and natural resources;

WHEREAS, the same Act stated in Section 5 that the SEP for Palawan shall have, as its general philosophy, the sustainable development of the Province;

WHEREAS, Section 16 of the same Act provides that the governance, implementation and policy direction of the SEP shall be exercised by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)";

WHEREAS, sometime in July of 1993, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) consulted the PCSD on the proposed Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) regulating "pa-aling" fishing within Palawan waters;

WHEREAS, the PCSD during its Regular Meeting on 26 November 1993, after conducting several consultations among its constituents on the matter and after due deliberation and recognizing the possible negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of the said fishing method to Palawan's coastal environment and small fishermen, passed Resolution No. 93-39 banning "pa-aling" fishing within Palawan waters;

WHEREAS, in a related move, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Palawan on 14 December 1994 passed Ordinance No. 50 banning "pa-aling" fishing within Palawan waters;

WHEREAS, despite the opposition of the PCSD and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan to "pa-aling" fishing, the Department of Agriculture (DA), upon recommendation of BFAR, on 24 February 1994 issued FAO No. 190 virtually allowing "pa-aling" fishing within Palawan waters;

WHEREAS, the PCSD during its Regular Meeting held last 25 March 1994, passed Resolution No. 94-48 reiterating the Council's opposition to "pa-aling" fishing;

WHEREAS, the Chairman of PCSD, Gov. Salvador P. Socrates requested the DA Secretary Roberto S. Sebastian requesting the latter to assess the effectivity of FAO 190 citing among others, that: (a) in fact the said FAO virtually allows "pa-aling" within Palawan and contrary to the FAO's claim, (b) "pa-aling" shall actually give the small fishermen of Palawan, and (c) that it is a public clamor among Palawenos to disallow "pa-aling" within Palawan's jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, despite the abovesited requests of the PCSD and its Chairman, DA Secretary Sebastian in his recent visit to Palawan reiterated the Department's position to allow "pa-aling" fishing;

WHEREAS, the Council invited BFAR Director Guillermo M. Reyes to its Regular Meeting on 27 May 1994 to shed light on

the matter but was not able to attend. Instead he sent a representative in the person of Mr. Jonathan O. Dickson, who likewise reiterated the DA's position on the matter, emphasizing that "pa-aling" is only allowed outside the jurisdiction of Palawan;

WHEREAS, after due deliberation, the Council believes that:

1. Contrary to the claims of BFAR, "pa-aling" is deemed too efficient and thus no longer sustainable that it virtually leaves nothing to the Palawan's small fishermen, thereby depriving the latter of their livelihood.
2. The monitoring report cited by BFAR allegedly stating that "pa-aling" is not environmentally destructive, is found with flaws and general assumptions and should not be made as basis to conclude. For example, the monitoring site during its pilot-testing stage was in fact not the same as the actual site where "pa-aling" was operating.
3. That the same report recommends "pa-aling" to be allowed provided that a strong monitoring component is installed. In this regard, it is the opinion of the Council that the FAO's weakest point in its implementation is the monitoring component. For example, BFAR inspects the "pa-aling" boats only once every quarter and there is no assurance that violations (like using the destructive "muro-ami" method, the forerunner of "pa-aling" currently banned) could be checked between this period.
4. Despite BFAR's insistence that "pa-aling" fishing is only allowed outside the municipal waters of Palawan, being too efficient it will still have an effect on the municipal fisheries as the latter is likewise dependent on the resources outside its boundary.
5. There are alternative lucrative fishing ventures and related marine resources exploitation activities other than "pa-aling" where these operators could enter into, and in fact should be promoted by BFAR like sea ranching, mariculture, seaweeds farming, etc. They have the capital and they could easily venture into other businesses. PCSD would be much willing to assist them, in this regard.
6. On the other hand, the small fishermen in Palawan with the dwindling marine resources brought about by "muro-ami" and now "pa-aling" does not have any other alternative. Short-term multi-million gains for these big capitalists should not be allowed at the expense of the small fishermen of Palawan. These operators are not from Palawan but their boats are physically based in Palawan and worst, they are not paying any taxes to Palawan.

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7. The DA/BFAR fails to recognize the purposes of R.A. 7611 (SEF Act) and R.A. 7160 (Local Government Code), the existence of PCSD under the Office of the President mandated to implement the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan towards Sustainable Development by unheeding to the pleas of the Council and that of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan's quest for local autonomy by disregarding the Ordinance banning "pa-aling".
8. Only the intervention of His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos could break the impasse of opinion between the DA/BFAR and the PCSD on "pa-aling".

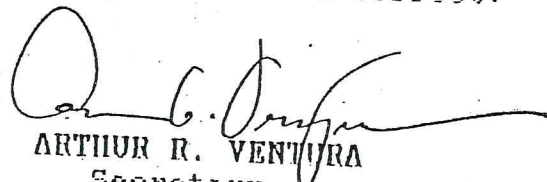
NOW THEREFORE, upon motion by Mr. Vic Milan and NEDA Deputy Director General Aniceto Sobrepena, duly seconded by all the members of the Council present;

RESOLVED, as it hereby resolved, that the PCSD request His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos to review FAO 190 issued by DA/BFAR and hopefully reverse its effectivity in favor of the small fishermen of Palawan and forward the cause of sustainable development, people empowerment and social equitability for which the country's leadership is committed to uphold;

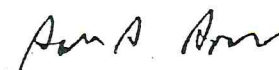
RESOLVED FINALLY, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos and to all concerned agencies for their information and appropriate action.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 27th day of May, 1994 in Puerto Princesa City.

Certified True and Correct:


ARTHUR R. VENTURA
Secretary

Approved:


SALVADOR P. SOCRATES
Chairman

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