

**SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES  
PHILIPPINE JUDICIAL ACADEMY  
in collaboration with the  
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK  
and the  
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE**

**TAGAYTAY DECLARATION OF  
COMMITMENT**

*Cognizant* that the environmental crisis faced by humankind today threatens the very support systems that make all life possible;

*Aware* that man is only one of the strands in the web of life and that whatever we do to the other strands we do to ourselves;

*Sensitive* to the fact that man, in his self-proclaimed wisdom, is merely a trustee, a steward and a guardian of the natural creations;

*Emphasizing* that any change must begin within one's self;

*Noting* that the Law is one of the engines that can propel a change in the way man has treated the natural elements of life;

*Determined* to use the law as a thinking tool to advance human behavior to a path befitting its role as the thinking part of Nature.

HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO -

1. At a personal level, that we will continue to expand our knowledge in the field of environmental protection to the end that, in due time, we will be able to share this knowledge with our peers and colleagues.

To the extent possible, we shall undertake measures to lead by example in such simple matters as reduction of solid waste in our homes and in our offices, and avoid the use of smoke-belching vehicles.

2. At an official level, we will:
  - a. Initiate solid waste reduction in our offices and within the circles of our influence.
  - b. Be keenly sensitive to the environmental issues that our beloved country faces today in our official decision-making process, of course, with due regard to the law and the individual human rights.
  - c. Conduct a periodic inventory of environment and natural resources-related cases with the end in view of expediting their resolution.

3. At the institutional level:

- a. To recommend to the Chief Justice through the PHILJA to study the feasibility of designating courts all over the country to handle cases involving violations of fundamental Environmental Laws, such as, the laws on clean air, solid waste management laws, forests, fisheries, and protected areas and criminal violations of pollution control laws.
- b. To properly disseminate Environmental Law information by urging the PHILJA and/or all associations of judges to conduct echo-seminars to judges and prosecutors nationwide. Toward this end, we shall assist in organizing information insemination campaigns on environmental protection.
- c. To request the Supreme Court and other concerned foundations to initiate an Environmental Award for the three best decisions on environmental law.
- d. To link up with the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law and other international organizations and judges worldwide for the institutional sharing of knowledge, experiences and expertise in the judicial handling of Environmental Law cases.

e. To form ourselves into a core team of environmental judges who shall undertake the abovementioned initiatives to the extent possible.

In God we implore for strength, wisdom and courage in the performance of this commitment.

Done this 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of August 2003, in the City of Tagaytay, Cavite.