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## **Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production**

### **I. Ecological Awareness and Actions**

Ecology is the branch of science that studies the interaction of organisms and their environments. This only means that whatever can be found in nature - whether microscopic or colossal or whether biotic or abiotic – has inevitably an effect on the rest, may it be directly or indirectly. Thus, these environmental challenges that the entire international community is facing right now are very much reflective of this interdependence of one another.

The interdependence of everyone and everything brings to the fore the law of nature. It seems there are manifest principles of balance and proportion that can be found in nature, and that man is invited to discover and to respect this. Human beings cannot just tamper it lest nature will take its revenge (as for instance in the forms of natural calamities).

Thus, having a considerable understanding of ecology impels men to handle it with utmost care and reverence. Consequently, environment-related problems will surely be minimized. Specially in developed countries, they are more equipped to handle environmental problems and issues. Instead of just being in corrective measures they already try to be proactive and be in preventive procedures. For instance, in the USA (or some states only), some households are required to have a solar panel. Measures like this could also be applied in developing countries, and not only in developed countries.

### **II. Development Planning**

Planning particularly development land use planning revolves around the systematic assessment, management and use of land in a holistic way. It could be considered as ‘holistic’ because there are many stakeholders and issues at stake in this discipline. It takes into consideration the ways how to use the land in order to meet the needs of all the stakeholders and to attain the equitable needs of people. It makes sure that the land use including all the resources related to it are also utilized and protected in accordance to the societal circumstances and people’s needs and welfare. The various land use activities have to be regulated to make sure that they are in line with the nation’s constitution and are in pursuit of the common good.

There are diverse activities related to the field. Some of the general principles that are considered when land use planning is talked about are the following: zoning, sustainable development, integrated planning, private-public interplay, pursuit of

inclusive public goods, ecological sustainability, and culture and arts. As such, in furthering the good causes pertaining to Mother Earth, the tripartite governance – harnessing synergy from government, civil sector, and business sector – could be maximized.

Government has its role in attaining balance between differing interests in land in order to maintain the general welfare. Its role is also to collect property taxes. Land or property owners are interested in the value of the land and the plans that can be made onto it. Non-land owners or groups of individuals may influence the decisions of those who make laws and policies related to land use. Advocacy groups are there to promote social justice and equity, environmental integrity, and land use sustainability. Business groups are there who can capitalize on the land through various establishments like malls, tourist attractions, neighborhoods and communities. In a nutshell, all these three major players are all stakeholders to carry out the mandate of serving the people and of upholding the common good.

Along this line, it is thus important to note that the plans of the national government set the space in managing and developing land. Regional Physical Framework Plans, Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plans and Comprehensive Land Use Plans have to cover the physical development of their respective territories, and thus shall be consistent with the National Physical Framework Plan. In other words, national goals have to trickle down to the local level particularly at the provincial level. Internal consistency across all levels has to be maintained. Plans and policies will emanate from these.

Horizontal linkages are found across units at the provincial level, and these involve activities related to planning, investment programming, and budgeting and expenditure management. The development and physical framework plans should be the main source of strategic programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) of the province. These PPAs serve as the main inputs in the preparation of the multi-year investment program which is a prioritized list of programs and projects with cost estimates, and with a definite timeframe for the implementation of each project.

There is also the vertical alignment. For one, it has to be assured that the national goals can be predicated at the lower level that is translated to the financial capability of local regions. Provincial plans and investment programs must serve as policy or document inputs for the preparation of higher level (regional and national) plans and programs. At the same time, such higher-level plans must provide a context for the preparation of provincial plans and programs. Similarly, plans and investment programs at the provincial level must provide a context for the preparation of lower level (city or municipal) plans and programs. In turn, city and municipal plans serve as inputs for the formulation of the provincial plan and investment program.

In sum, environmental challenges can be curbed and addressed properly if there is a better development planning (and it being implemented appropriately).