

**Administrative Order
No. 24
June 29, 1992**

SUBJECT : Acknowledging the National Federation of Upland Farmers as the Primary People's Organization in the Development of the Uplands, and Prescribing the Mode of Partnership Between Such Federation and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The challenge of improving the quality of life of the upland farmers combined with the objective of stabilizing and rehabilitating degraded sloping areas remains a primary concern in the Philippine's economic development. Thus, in the last few years, the government has focused its attention on alleviating poverty in the uplands by providing alternative livelihood opportunities while developing and promoting technologies and approaches that would minimize soil erosion, rehabilitate denuded areas, conserve water and protect the remaining forest, mangroves and near-shore areas of the country. These efforts need to be sustained and institutionalized to achieve long-term gains of sustainable development. Community participation as an integral part of any planning process has to be institutionalized.

To advance this effort it is imperative that the National Federation of Upland Farmers be recognized as a partner of the government for upland development.

This Federation was created and duly registered after a three-year process of community organizing work. The formal organization took place after the Second National Upland Farmers Congress in May 1992. Official representatives of the various regional upland farmer organizations make up the federation.

Sec. 1. Statement of Policies. The recognition of the National Federation of Upland Farmers shall be governed by the following policies:

1. Various upland farmers group shall be organized to strengthen the upland farmers participation in the environment and natural resources development and to help organize in areas where there are still no associations of upland farmers.
2. Upland farmers dependent on the public forest for their livelihood shall be assisted in the development of allocated parcels of open and denuded forest lands into productive agroforestry farms, and shall be encouraged to take the lead in the implementation of upland development projects of the DENR.

3. The Federation shall help the government in the protection and conservation of the upland natural resources of the country.
4. The Federation shall be consulted in the formulation of appropriate policies concerning upland development.

Sec. 2. The National Federation of Upland Farmers aims to mobilize and empower marginal upland farmers for economic and social progress of the nation in the production of food, and in the rehabilitation and conservation of the country's natural resources. The recognition of the National Federation of Upland Farmers shall endeavor to achieve the following objectives:

- a. The Federation shall be the primary mechanism for the fair and substantive representation and participation of the upland farmers in official decision-making processes of DENR. The Federation is therefore a major mechanism for the empowerment of the Filipino upland dwellers.
- b. The Federation shall serve as the consultative recommendatory and advisory body to the DENR on upland development and shall operate within a participatory and democratic framework.
- c. The Federation shall establish effective linkages to institutionalize synergy among upland dwellers and other institutions and agencies which have the capacity to provide the necessary social, economic and physical infrastructure.

Sec. 3. Composition. The National Federation shall be composed of all the regional federations of upland farmers organized and to be organized by the 13 Regional Officers of the DENR. Beneficiaries of the existing DENR upland development programs shall compose the regional federations.

Sec. 4. Independence and Autonomy. The Federation shall determine its own programs, plans, structure, mechanisms and operational guidelines, and may seek access and resources from both government and non-government sources.

The Federation shall have a legal identity distinct from any government agency but shall relate with government agencies primarily with the DENR. It shall also address the concerns of non-government organizations and/or private groups, whose concerns are shared by the Federation.

Any upland farmers' group may relate directly with the DENR. All upland farmer associations are however encouraged to coordinate with the Federation on issues and policies concerning environment and natural resources development.

To facilitate the functions of the Federation, it shall have reasonable access to all the units and offices of DENR and relate directly with the Undersecretary for Field Operations of the DENR through a coordinating Secretariat. The DENR shall maintain and respect the independence and autonomy of the Federation.

Sec. 5. Organizational Structure and Policies. The Federation's highest decision-making power is vested in the National Upland Farmers Congress composed of all the official representatives of the regional federations of upland farmers.

Sec. 6. Technical Assistance and Services. All DENR offices shall extend the necessary technical assistance and services to the Federation as far as practicable.

A National Liaison Secretariat shall be designated by the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to provide direct coordination between the Federation and the DENR

Sec. 7. Implementing Guidelines. The Federation, in consultation with the National Liaison Secretariat shall determine its organizational structure, rules, and regulations necessary to operationalize this Order.

Sec. 8. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect immediately.

FULGENCIO S. FACTORAN, JR.
Secretary