

Annex A.

People's Declaration of the Philippine Seas in Crisis
Quezon City, Philippines
16 November 2012

We, individuals and organizations from different regions, communities and sectors from all over the country, have come together to declare that the Philippine Seas are in crisis.

We acknowledge that the Philippine Seas, considered the center of global marine biodiversity, has now become a fragile environment that needs urgent attention. The unhealthy state of our seas will gravely affect us, as well as the more than 30 million Filipinos who depend on these marine resources for survival and subsistence.

The following indicate why we are in a crisis:

- Our marine ecosystems are in decline. Only 5% of the country's coral reefs remain in good condition. Of the 450,000 hectares of mangroves reported in 1914, only around 100,00 hectares remained as of 1992. Ten out of the 13 of the country's fishing grounds are either severely fished or are overexploited.
- We have polluted our seas. Our coastlines are littered with trash, and our waters are tainted with harmful chemicals and toxics from domestic sewage, industrial discharges, urban and industrial run-off, accidents, spillage, explosions, sea dumping operations, mining, agricultural run-offs and pesticides, waste heat sources, and radioactive discharges
- Carbon emissions on land also damage our marine life. Climate change, caused by burning fossil fuels, is increasing sea water temperatures and acidity, melting glaciers, raising sea levels, and changing ocean currents.
- Unsustainable commercial fishing activities are a key threat faced by our seas. Overfishing and destructive fishing particularly illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) by commercial fishing fleets within the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is seen as a major problem affecting any conservation effort.
- Unsustainable fishing activities have emptied our seas of the marine resources that we have depended on for generations. Destructive fishing activities such as dynamite and cyanide fishing, *muro-ami*, bottom trawling, pirate fishing and overfishing, are depleting our sea's resources without giving it time to recover.

As an archipelagic nation, we need to reverse the continued decline of our seas. Our country's food security and economic development depend on improving the health of our oceans.

If we are to continue enjoying the bounty of our marine resources, we need to rethink our approach to managing our seas.

We urge the Philippine government to acknowledge that our seas are experiencing an unprecedented crisis—and that there is a need to create an appropriate roadmap to reverse the ongoing damage as well as to end overfishing.

We demand that the Aquino Administration immediately act against the crisis of overfishing and marine ecosystem degradation by:

- 1. ensuring that the protection, rehabilitation, and conservation of Philippine Seas is a national priority;**
- 2. Creating and immediately implementing a roadmap that eliminates overfishing, and allows the recovery of the Philippine fisheries stocks and marine ecosystems to continuously provide for our future needs.**

We owe the sea our air, our sustenance, our survival. We, communities from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, threatened by overfishing and the destruction of our Marine Environment, hereby also declare our pledge to save the Philippine Seas.

How do we carry out the 2 demands mentioned in the declaration?

Creation of PHILIPPINE SEAS RESCUE TEAM that carries the mandate to constitute the Emergency Rescue Plan that shall

- a. reduce fisheries and marine ecosystem pressure and
- b. gather baseline support for marine ecosystem and fisheries production target and
- c. identify safety nets for dislocation and strengthen existing policy regime and harmonize existing laws and policies.

Sans the creation of the Rescue Team the conference calls on the following:

fishing license/permits freeze – no more new fishing capacity everywhere. We recognize that fishing efforts have already exceeded the capacity of our natural resources to replenish. We call on the national government to issue a moratorium on issuances of new commercial fishing permits. This way we are maintaining current fishing capacity but at the same time recognizing that we need to restrict entry of new fishing vessels using the precautionary principle.

stronger vessel registry and licensing system - to establish actual baseline data on how much we are actually harvesting and how many tons of fish we need to harvest for current and future needs. We also need to know whether current fisheries production and its trend can feed our growing population.

making 15 km from the shores exclusive to municipal fisherfolks – We need to implement the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 that stipulates the preferential use of municipal fisherfolks, those who use fishing vessels of less than 3 gross tons, over the 15-kilometer municipal waters. We need to protect the relatively rich fishing grounds from the intrusion of large commercial fishing vessels, that have efficient but destructive fishing gears.

moratorium on reclamation projects, land conversion, construction of coal fired power plants and sea dumping – as a crucial component to stop degradation, pollution, and acidification. We need to protect the integrity of our land and water resources against indiscriminate use. We need to review laws and policies on natural resource extraction and underscore the mandate of the State to provide a healthy and balanced ecology for its people.

Conference Participants:

Greenpeace Southeast Asia, UNFAO, Tambuyog Development Center Inc., NGOs for Fisheries Reform, Donsol BADAS, DENR-PAWB-CMMO, BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES CENTRAL OFFICE AND REGIONAL OFFICES, SAVE THE PHILIPPINE SEAS, UP Marine Science Institute, ANAK-BALAYAN Ang Nagkakaisang Mamamayang Kostal ng Balayan, **WWF, NAGSAMA –Lamon Bay, CERD** Center for Empowerment and Resource Development , **PUMALI-MV** Pinalakas na Uganayan ng Mangingisda sa Luzon, Mindanao at Visayas, **Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, PhilDHRRA Visayas** Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas – Visayas, **ECO Fish, UP Ecotour, PUMASAG** - Pinag-isang Uganayan ng mga Mangingisda, **NAMAMANGKA-** Nagkakaisang Maliliit na Mangingisda na Kabite, **PKSK** - Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan, **SAMMACA** -

Samahan Ng Maliliit Na Mga Mangingisda Ng. Calatagan, **PAFC – Zambales** Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Council, **International Fishing Workers Collective-Ibon International, LLCC, ISO** - institute of Social Order, **SMMM, IIMC, SMB, SAMANASEKAP Inc., PO BLM, PhilGrassroot –ERDF, IPDM-** Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao, **SIKAT** - Sentro para sa Ikauunlad ng Katutubong Agham at Teknolohiya, **BALAOD** - Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, **CARET Inc.** - Center for Agrarian Reform, Empowerment and Transformation, **CI Philippines** - Conservation International Philippines, **MAPAGPALA** - Mamamayan Para sa Pagpapanatili at Pagpapaunlad ng Lawa ng Laguna, **NLB-IFARMC-Quezon** - Northern Lamon Bay, Integrated Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council –Quezon, **Golden Bay MPC, BO , Laguna Lake Consultative Council, TRIAS, PANGISDA – PILIPINAS** - Progresibong Alyansa ng mga Mangingisda-Pilipinas, **PRRM** - Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, **BANTAY DAGAT, NFRDI, Hayuma Foundation, Philippine School of Business Administration Student Service Center, Donsol LGU**