



Good morning ladies and gentlemen. We are proud to present to you this very first report on the State of PA Management in the Philippines. This document was motivated by the need to put in place a reporting process to the public on how far we have achieved so far in our efforts to conserve our biodiversity through the system of protected areas. We believe this reporting mechanism will be a great instrument for transparency and accountability; and enjoin the public and various stakeholders to support our efforts. As a first report, it provides a historical review of the nation's conservation record, and how our strategies have evolved as we learn valuable lessons, improve from experiences, and meet challenges at various points in time. We hope future reports will provide better information on impacts and outcome of our work, as we get the much needed support in examining the evidences of our work. This report then is meant to inspire, and call to action so that we are able to more sustainably manage our biodiversity resources to meet the needs of the present and future generations of Filipinos.



The Philippines is one of the 17 mega diverse countries which host about 70-80% of the world's biodiversity. While the country holds the greatest concentration of native plants and animals, the Philippines is also one of the hottest of biodiversity hotspots in the world.

## GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PHILIPPINE BIODIVERSITY

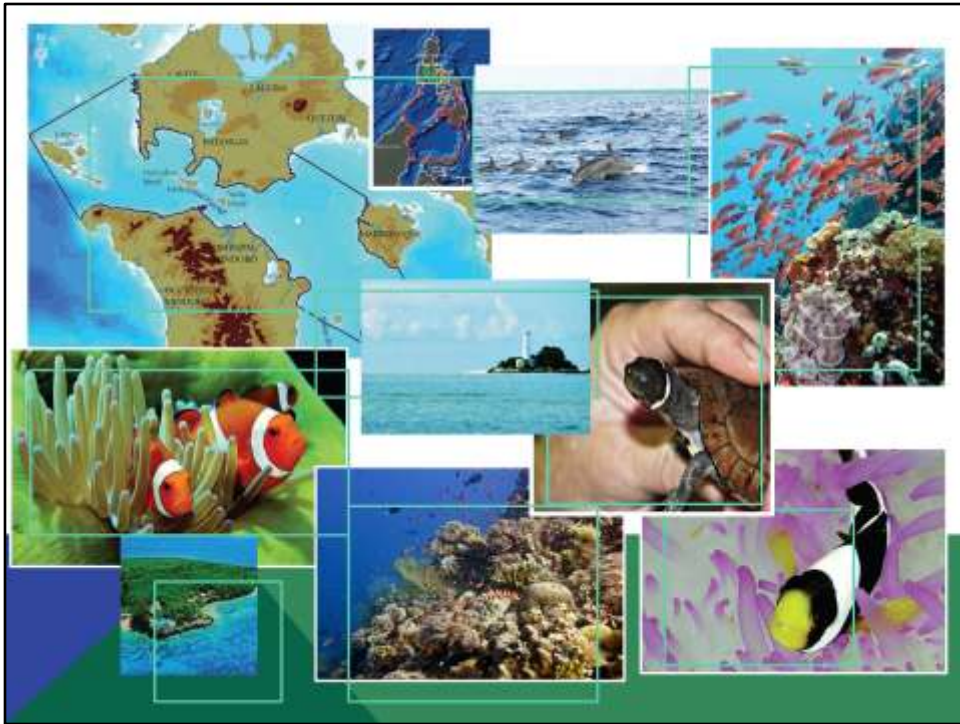
- Most diverse country on earth on a per hectare basis;
- 4<sup>th</sup> leading country in the world in bird endemism
- Has greatest concentration of terrestrial mammalian diversity in the world;
- Has more than 52, 100 described species; half of which can be found only in the Philippines;
- One of the most important centers of amphibians and reptiles in Southeast Asia;
- Extremely high species discovery rates

The Philippines boast of an astounding biodiversity record:

- 1- It is considered the most diverse country on earth on a per hectare basis;
- 2- The country is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of bird endemism - it is home to an astounding 576 species of birds, of which 195 are endemic and 126 are restricted range species
- 3- With 174 indigenous mammalian species, 111 of which are endemic, it has the greatest concentration of terrestrial mammalian diversity in the world; but it also ranked 8<sup>th</sup> among the most threatened;
- 4- We have more than 52,100 described species; half of which are found only in the Philippines; out of these, about 2% are threatened
- 5- The country is also one of the most important centers of amphibians (with 101 species) and reptiles (with 258 species) in SE Asia, 68 of which are endemic
- 6- Rate of discovery of new species in the country is one of the highest in the world, with a total of 36 new species of herpetofauna discovered in the last 10 years



The habitats of Philippine biodiversity are concentrated in its 228 key biodiversity areas<sup>7</sup> covering 7.6 million hectares, including 128 terrestrial and 100 marine sites. The KBAs are habitats of 209 globally threatened species, 419 endemic species of amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and freshwater fishes, and 62 congregatory birds species.<sup>8</sup> This covers 7,610,943 hectares equivalent to 25% of total land area. Of these, 117 are terrestrial and 11 are marine areas.

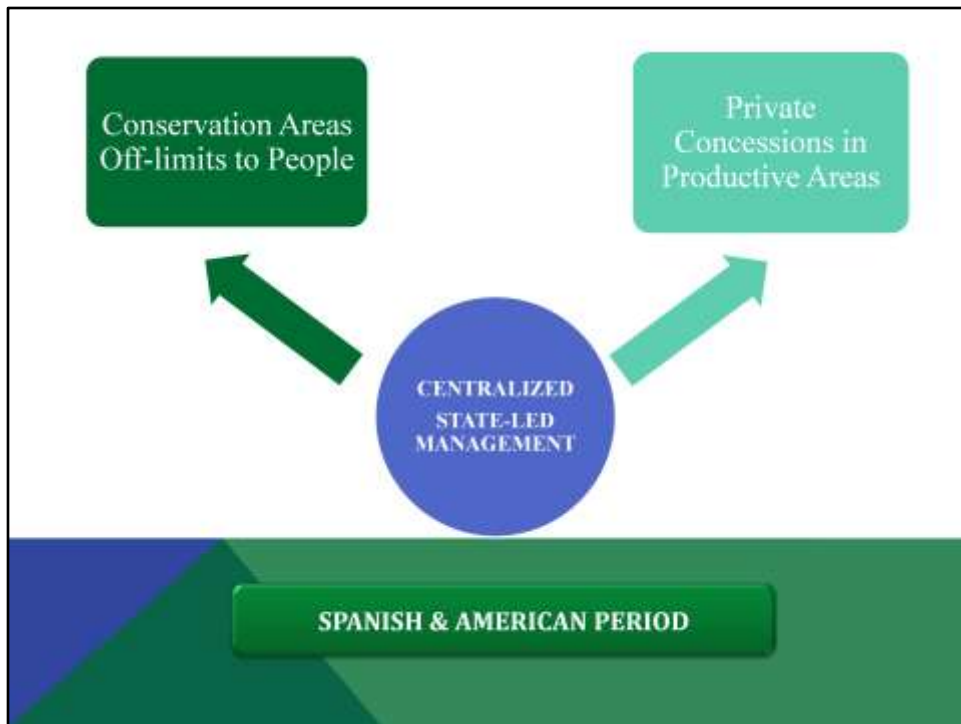


The Philippines is popularly referred to as the global center of marine biodiversity, or the ocean counterpart of the Amazon River Basin, because of the rich variety of life in its marine ecosystems. The Verde Island Passage holds the record of the most diverse coral and shorefish species in the world.

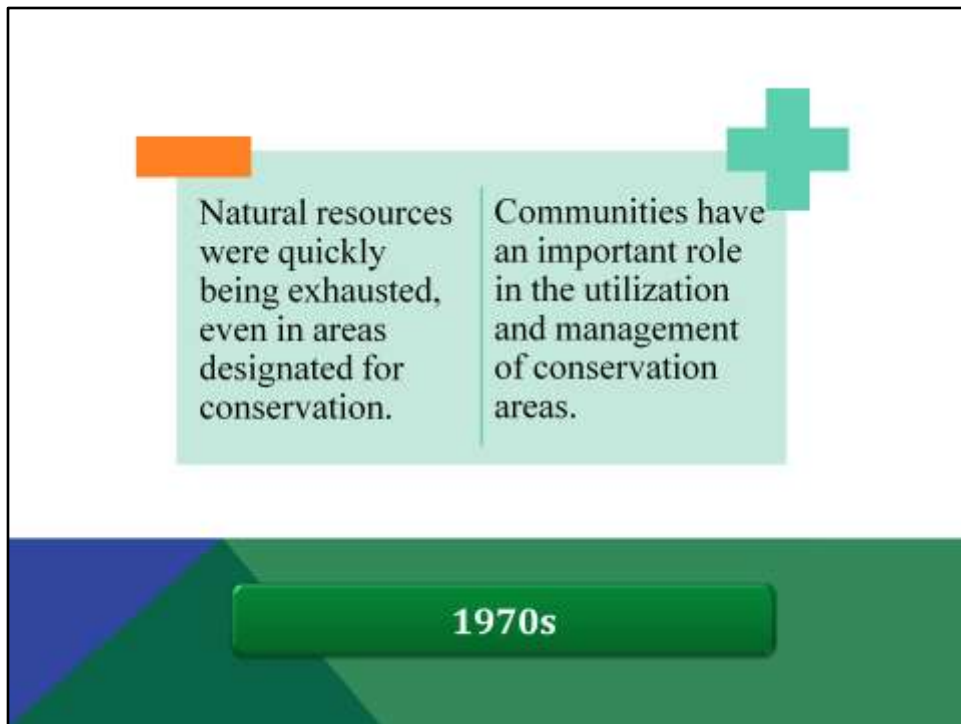


Allow me then to provide a brief historical background of the Philippines' conservation efforts.

Our ancestors have for centuries, protected our valuable biodiversity resources. The indigenous peoples have, through their traditional governance systems and practices, managed to merge natural resources management, spirituality and community livelihood. In fact, they are the first practitioners of what we now called protected area management.



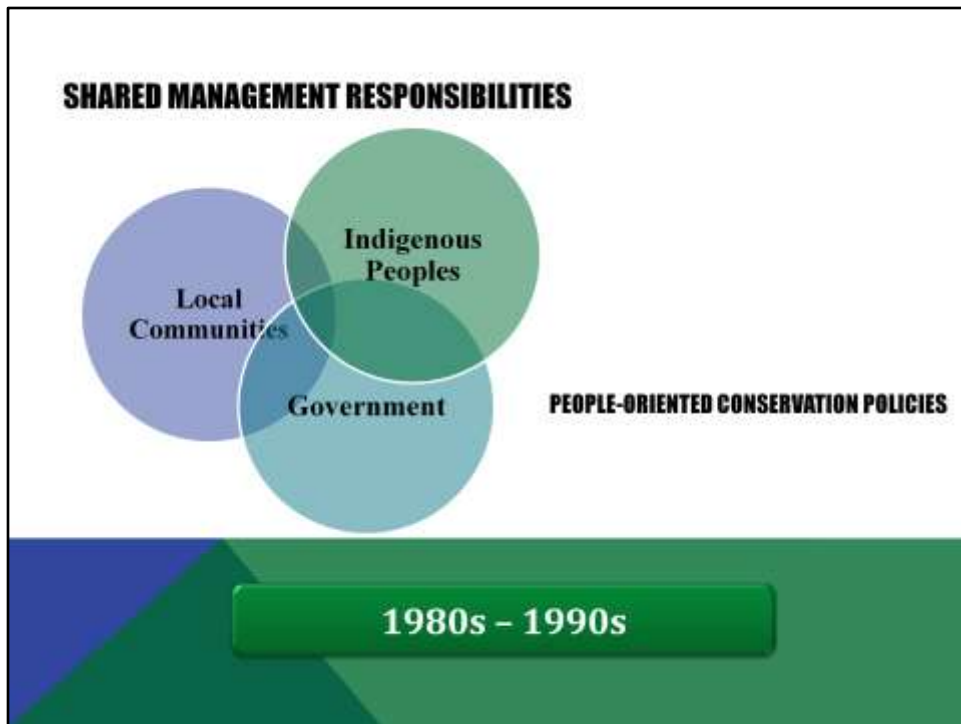
When the Spaniards and Americans came, they introduced centralized, state-led management to utilize and protect the country's rich natural resources. The centralized control approach was generally adopted by the government of the young Philippine Republic, where conservation areas were largely off-limits to people, and productive areas were opened for private ownership or concessions



However, by the 1970s, government policies began to shift to acknowledge that: (1) the natural resources were quickly being exhausted, even in areas designated for conservation, and (2) communities are part of the conservation areas, with an important role in the utilization and management of these areas. T







The people-oriented conservation policies evolved in the 1980s and 1990s to strengthen shared management responsibilities between the government, and indigenous and local communities over protected areas.

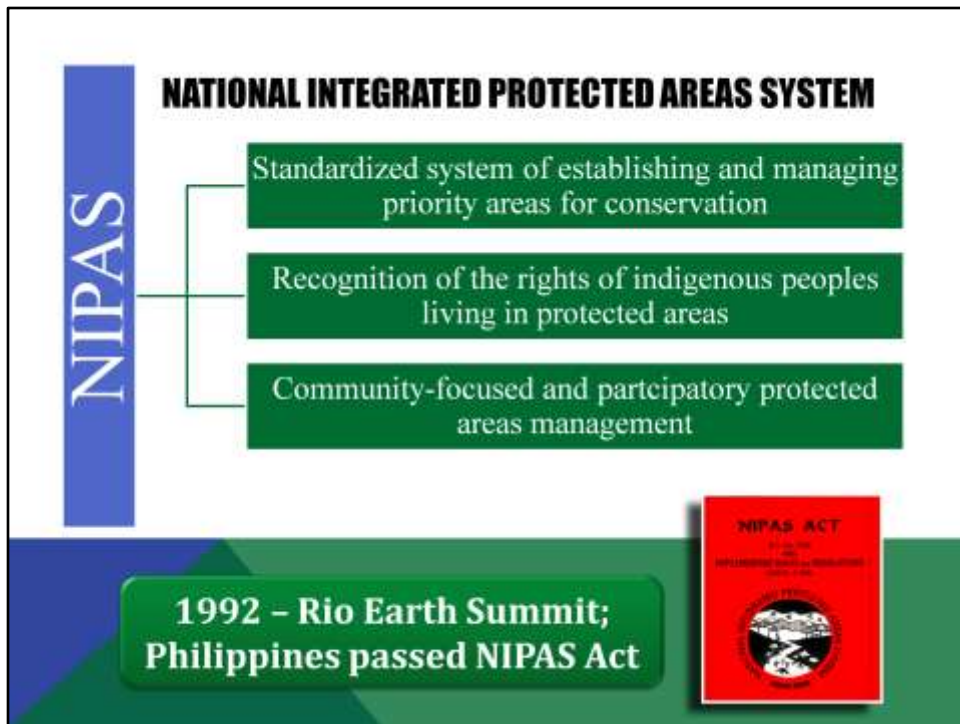


The Philippines became known as the lead player in recognition of IP rights to territories and natural resources, with earlier programmes on recognition of ancestral domain claims under DAO #2. The community based approach to conservation became the centerpiece of new policies at that time, which were carried until the present.



In fact, the Philippines is hailed as one of the pioneers in community based approaches in natural resources management and recognition of IP rights

CBNRM thus became the major program for sustainable NRM and conservation. Inspired by our successful experience in CBFM, we translated this into the management of protected areas. Recognizing that there are communities living within and around our protected areas and KBAs, a key component of our conservation program involved working with communities, and engaging them in our efforts.



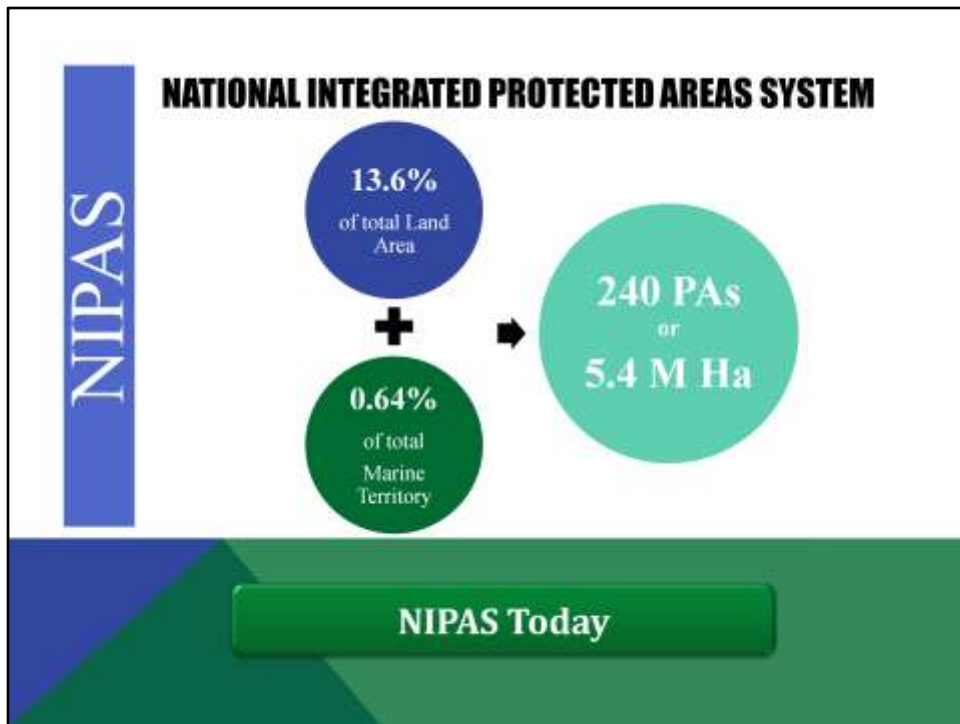
True to its record in pioneering conservation programs, the country enacted the NIPAS law in 1992, a few months before the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

NIPAS was inspired by the resurgence of democratic institutions during the EDSA revolution, resulting in the rationalization of environmental policies in the country. No less than the 1987 Constitution created a new category of public domain, called national parks. Thus, the law was considered a major shift in many ways:

It provided for a standardized system of establishing and managing priority areas for conservation, through the establishment of protected areas. Under the law, PAs enjoy the highest form of protection which disallows natural resources extractive activities. It also created the mechanism for participatory management through the multi stakeholder protected area management boards.

It recognized the rights of indigenous peoples living in protected areas. NIPAS law was the very first legislation to acknowledge the rights of local and IP communities and the recognition of their rights in the management of protected areas. This important provisions were there even before our Indigenous Peoples Rights Act law was passed.

It adopted a system for community focused and participatory protected area management



Today, almost 20 years after NIPAS implementation, a total of 240 protected areas have been established covering 5.4 million hectares. This represents 13.6% of the country's land area and about 0.64% of the nation's marine territory.

These areas represent a range of IUCN categories, with majority of the PAs belonging to the category of watershed reserves, protected landscapes and national parks.



NIPAS is now attempting to balance the need for conservation and improving the lives of poor people dependent on the natural resources, while at the same time facilitating multi-sectoral responsibility for protecting these priority areas for conservation.

## BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- Biogeographical representativeness
- Limited capacity for protected area management
- Inadequate systems for financial planning, budgetary management and revenue generation

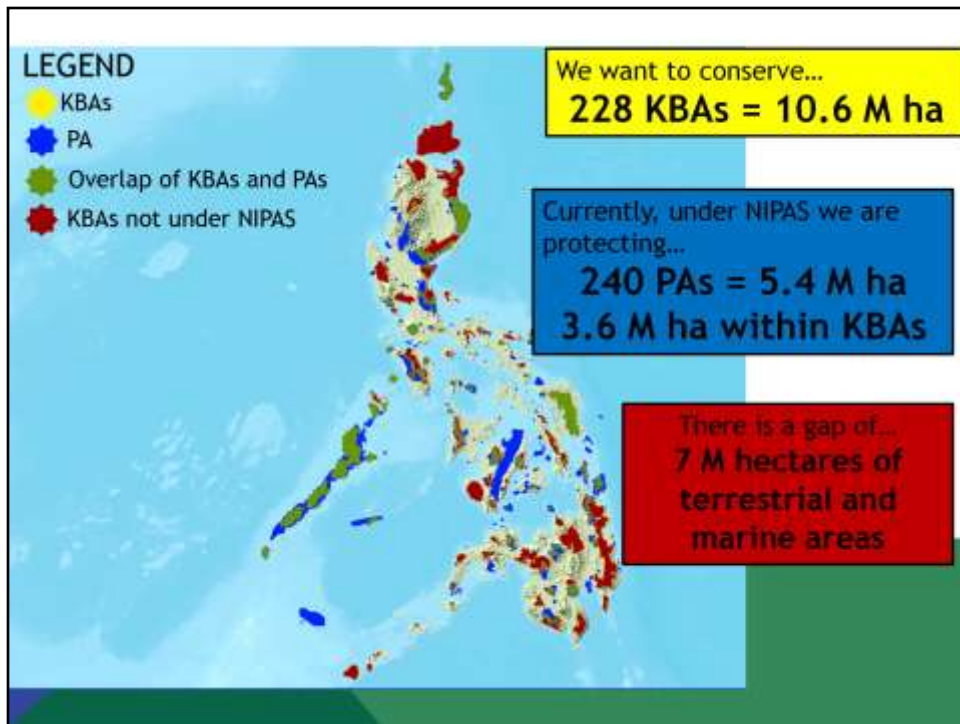
However, the effective implementation of the national PA management system is faced by a number of barriers:

The first barrier refer to the biogeographical representativeness of the country's PA system. Despite the wide coverage of our PAs, significant ecological gaps exist. There is a need to consider innovative governance of protected areas to fill these gaps and conserve biodiversity ultimately;

Second, the Philippines still has limited capacity for protected area management. As the number of PAs expand, so does the resource requirements for effectively managing these. Among the key capacity gaps include: planning, monitoring and evaluation of the national PA system; demarcation; enforcement; management systems and tools; structure and functioning management boards of protected areas; among others.

Finally, there are inadequate systems for financial planning, budgetary management and revenue generation – most of the protected areas are financed entirely out of government revenues; systems to capitalize on alternative revenue streams from ecotourism and ecosystem services are not fully developed; trust fund mechanism exists but revenue generation has been limited





Let me explain the first barrier on biogeographical representativeness.

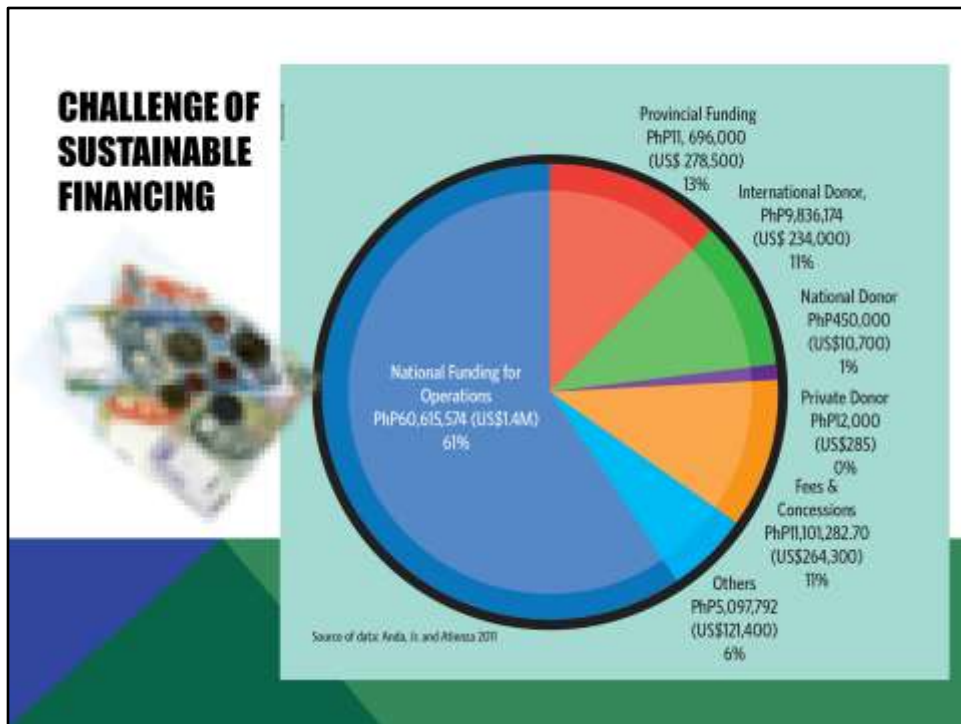
Since many of the PAs were established long before the KBAs were identified, a large number of these are located outside of the identified KBAs. Thus, only about 35% of the KBAs are deemed protected by law. That is, about 65% of the country's KBAs still lack protection through the NIPAS.

There is thus a gap of some 7 M hectares of KBAs that are needed to be brought under BD conservation efforts through NIPAS and various means. What is clear is that we cannot rely on the NIPAS alone to establish protected areas lest our actions be overtaken by the irreversible damage brought about by unsustainable practices.

It therefore becomes imperative to seek innovative ways to place these areas under protection and sustainable management, thru a range of governance regimes.

Sequence of overlays:

KBAs – yellow



Let me now tackle the issue of financing. Financing of protected areas has relied heavily on the national government budget, with very little revenue generation capacity demonstrated by the PAs. A recent study conducted in SE Asia reveals that based on a sample of 79 PAs, an average of 61% of PA expenditures come from the national government budget; while the rest comes from contributions from LGUs, various donor organizations. Fees and concessions and other sources constitute only 17% of total expenditures incurred as of 2009.

## PA Financing Analysis in SE Asia

Ave.Existing Staff per PA (Phil)	4
Benchmark Staff per PA (SE Asia)	32
Staff Gap per PA in Phil.	28
Ave. Annual Existing Operating Expenditures per PA (Phil)	P875,103
Benchmark Annual Operating Expenditures per PA (SE Asia)	P5,339,930
Annual Expenditure Gap per PA (Phil)	P4,464,827
Annual Total Expenditure Gap for all PAs (Phil)	P1,067,093,562

To summarize,

The Philippines has to increase its staff to 28 per PA to be at par with regional benchmarks

In terms of expenditures, each PA has an annual gap of P 4.5 Million; translating into an annual PA financing gap of Php 1.067 Billion.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**Link protected areas to the wider landscape**

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**Build broader stakeholder support for PAs & management objectives**

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**Work together with common goals but different roles**

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**Build capacity for PAs management, including financing**

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**Maintain PAs for the future through science, indigenous knowledge, and policy**

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In order to address these barriers, the following key recommendations are proposed:

- 1- link protected areas to the wider landscape
- 2- build broader stakeholder support for PAs and management objective
- 3- work together with common goals but different roles
- 4- build capacity for PA management
- 5- maintain PAs for the future through science, indigenous knowledge and policy

## LINK PROTECTED AREAS TO THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

IPs

Local  
Communities

Entrepreneurs  
& Consumers

Government

- ✓ Aligned interests
- ✓ Linked PAs and livelihood landscapes
- ✓ Equitable allocation of access to land and natural resources

= Less competition over (conservation) resources



Protected areas management must handle social and political, not just technical, issues. In the Philippines, despite the record of degradation, protected areas still provide valuable ecosystem goods and services that people need. Protected areas conservation must be seen in the broader landscape where the natural wealth continues to provide for the needs of the people. Part of the socio-economic considerations of PA management is ensuring equitable access to opportunities, especially for the poor and marginalized communities who are almost entirely dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. If the interests of IP and local communities, entrepreneurs, consumers, local and national government are aligned and met by linking protected areas to the landscape where people live and make a living, and by equitable allocation of access to the land and natural resources, there will be less competition over the resources that are set aside for conservation.

## **BUILD BROADER STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT FOR PAS & MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

**Accurate Information System**

**Effective Communication Tools**

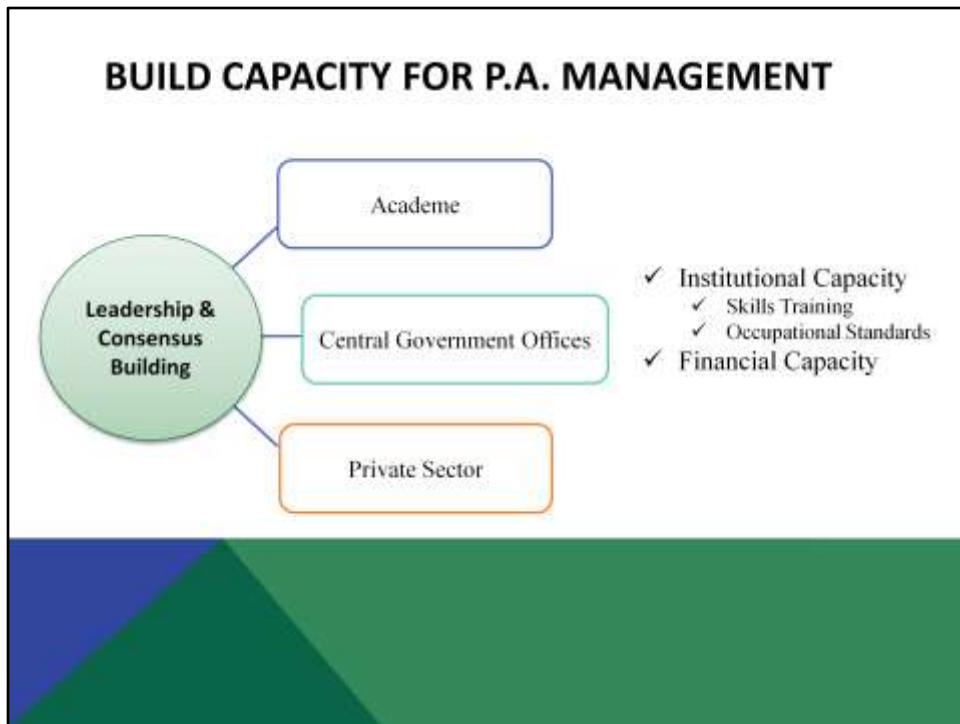
**Accurate Progress Reporting**

- ✓ Inform stakeholders about resources and their values so that they can make informed decisions
- ✓ Governance transparency and accountability

The biological resources of the Philippines are very important to the global community because of their abundance, diversity and uniqueness. However, there is very little information available to the public on what is there, what their values are for people, how much people will invest to conserve them, and perhaps pay to offset or replace the loss of those they'd rather use. The government has to invest more in an accurate information system, and effective communication tools to inform stakeholders about the resources and their values, so that they can make informed decisions. Accurate reporting of progress also ensures governance transparency and accountability. Rekindling the people's natural and traditional affinity to the environment through information and knowledge sharing will facilitate conservation programs.



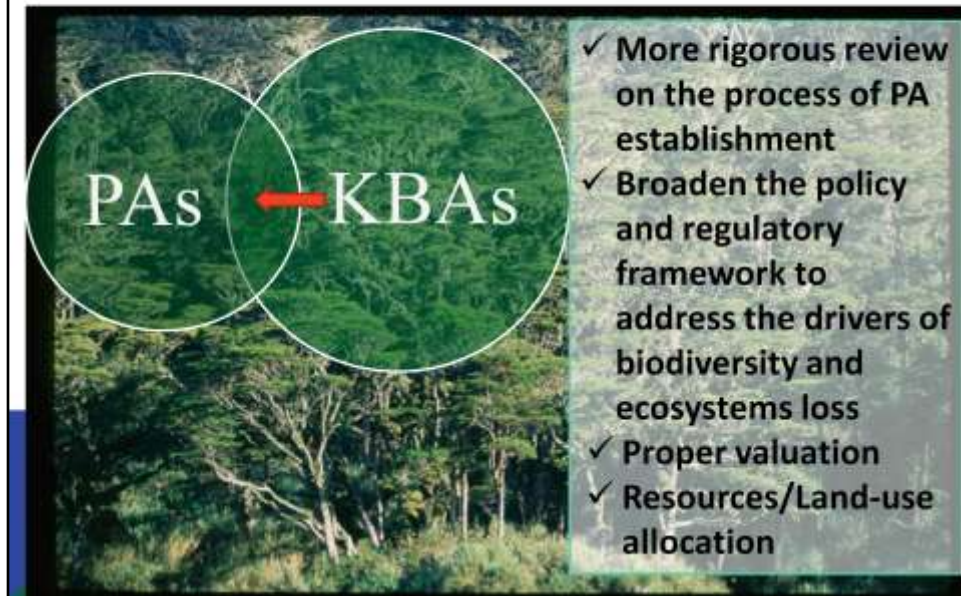
The Philippine Development Plan (2012-2016) outlines how environmental protection and natural resources conservation are critical to inclusive economic growth. In order for inclusive, sustainable growth to be achieved, economic planners, environmental managers, entrepreneurs, consumers, indigenous communities, school teachers, prosecutors, judges – everyone – must have a shared commitment to the common goal, even while pursuing their sectoral interests and priorities. The diversity of stakeholder groups means that each may have a different perspective of the importance of protected areas, priority actions and the roles that stakeholders play. However, there should be a common interest in conserving the natural heritage. A lot of the protection objectives can also be achieved, not only through NIPAS, but by other expanded options for natural resources management complementing NIPAS that recognizes the roles of other actors such as IP and local communities, local governments and private sector.



The Philippines currently has an abundance of talent and expertise in all the technical aspects of protected areas management (biophysical sciences, economics, community development, politics and governance). However, the experts are in the academe, private sector or in the central offices of government agencies. Effective PA management also calls for new approaches and access to and development of new knowledge and technology to address various issues. It also necessitates that we harness the inherent expertise of our local and IP communities that have proven successful for centuries. It requires extraordinary leadership and consensus building skills to bring together and orchestrate multi-disciplinary tasks that require integration of various disciplines and skills coming from different groups with different priorities. In the specific protected areas, the PAMB and protected area staff must provide such leadership. In the long term, it is crucial that the caliber of site-based protected area staff be elevated through skills training and clear occupational standards. The PAMB should also strengthen its institutional/organizational and financial capacity to complement enhancements in technical capacity. There is enormous potential to raise revenues from ecosystem services especially since most people are willing to pay, for as long as the management institution is capable and trustworthy.



## MAINTAIN PAS FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH SCIENCE, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND POLICY



Many scientists have expressed the concern that despite the significant gains in protected areas management, the Philippines is still losing its remaining biodiversity in our forest and marine ecosystems. In other words, the country is either not effective in conserving its resources, or not fast enough in protecting ecosystems at risk. Clearly, government has to rationalize the designation of PAs to cover all KBAs, which it is doing through a more rigorous review process of PA designation. The government should also broaden the policy and regulatory framework to address the drivers of biodiversity and ecosystems loss through proper valuation and resource/land-use allocation.

## WHAT ACTIONS ARE WE TAKING?

- Improving management effectiveness in existing PAs
- Rationalization of national PA system
- Expansion of conservation coverage through recognition of indigenous community conserved areas (ICCAs) and establishment of local conservation areas by LGUs
- Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in local agricultural landscapes
- Capacity development of the sector
- Improve PA financing sustainability

In light of the situation then, what actions are we taking to improve our performance in PA management:

First, we are targeting the improvement of management effectiveness in exiting PAs. This we are doing through stronger engagement with communities, LGUs and other sectors to address enforcement and financing issues; an aggressive program PACBARMA issuance; delineation and demarcation of proclaimed PAs; preparation and updating of management plans, and preparation of business plans. These actions are all aimed at ensuring that the country's PAs contribute to the country's goal of promoting inclusive and sustained growth.

Second, we are rationalizing the existing PA system, such that we maintain only those which have high conservation values; so that the rest can be allocated to their highest and best use. This would involve a clear process of screening, and the integration of such areas into the framework of the province's and physical framework plans, and in the municipality's comprehensive land use plans. We will also make sure that these areas are placed under appropriate management systems, such that they do not become converted into "open access" parts of the public domain. We will do this on a demand basis by LGUs and other sectors, such that there is clear ownership, transparency and shared responsibility in the process.

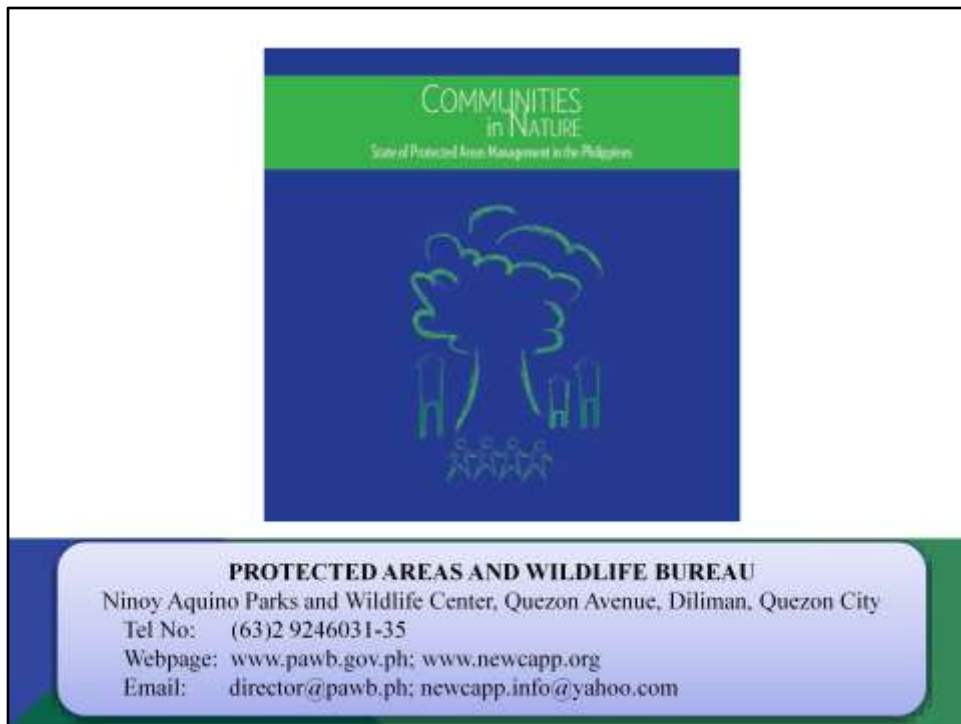
Third, we are now in the process of testing new approaches to diversify the governance regimes in our KBAs through the UNDP-GEF funded NewCAPP Project. This move is borne out of the very long process for PA establishment under the NIPAS, and also to recognize the potential contribution of LGUs, local communities, and IP communities in conservation. We hope that in the near future, we will be able to embark on a replication process to undertake these more systematically, supported by a national registry, and linked with the international registry maintained by UNEP/WCMC. We believe these strategies will provide a great boost to our

## **A CALL TO ACTION**

- **Support by other parties and international organizations to jointly develop programs that would address capacity development needs**
- **Expansion of ICCAs and local conservation areas to meet Aichi targets will require strong back up in documentation and mapping, establishment of national registry, with links to UNEP/WCMC and Global ICCA Consortium**

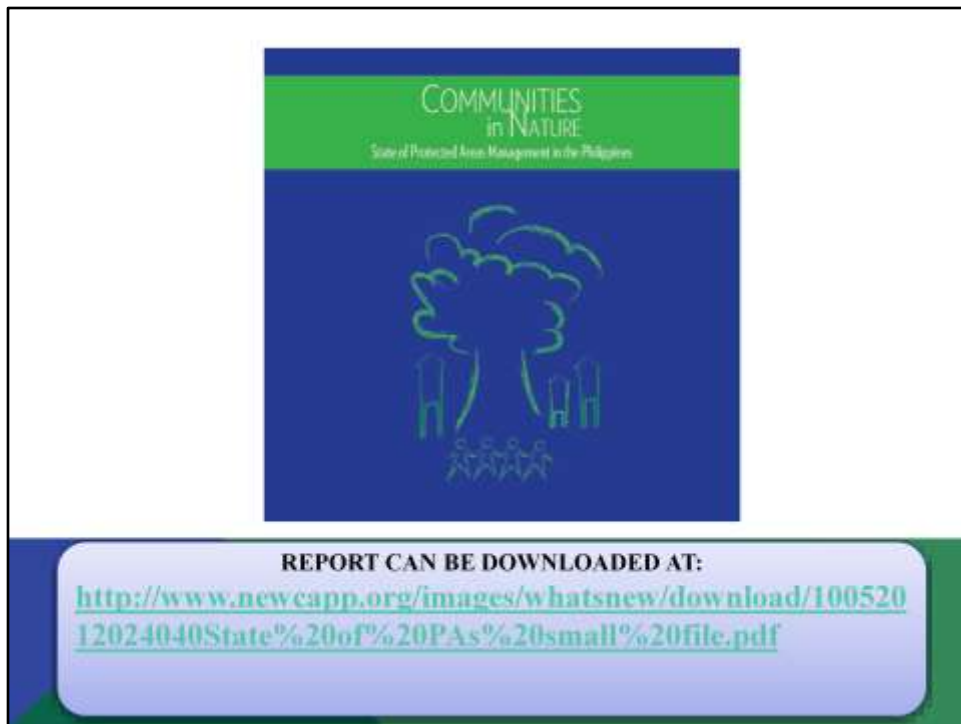
We would like to end this presentation with a call to action by governments represented here, as well as international organizations, BGOs and other support groups, to jointly address the capacity development needs we have identified. We believe that partnerships would be vital to boost our agenda for improving PA management in the Philippines.

In particular, as we embark on new directions to expand our protected areas system through recognition of ICCAs and local conservation areas, additional resources would be required to map, document, and establish a national registry. The potential presented by these areas would help us greatly exceed our Aichi targets. ICCAs, for example, are estimated to be about as large as our current system of protected areas – so we expect to double our achievements in this regard. We hope we can link this with the global registry maintained by UNEP/WCMC, so that appropriate protection and recognition can be provided. The work of the consortium would also be important to promote exchange of learnings, and global advocacy in this regard.



Thank you for your attention.

Copies of our report are available in hard copies and CD at the back.



The report is also available on line at the above address.