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TONY MAHILUM
"UNANG PANAHON"



THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACT OF 2009

The signing into law of Republic Act 9729 (R.A. 9729), otherwise known as the Climate Change Act of 2009, is a welcome development in this calamity-stricken country. The new law seeks to protect the citizens from natural disasters brought about by the changing climatic patterns, as well as in dealing with their effects.

The law created the Climate Change Commission (the Commission) which shall be an independent and autonomous body which shall have the same status as that of a national government agency. The Commission shall be the sole policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the programs and action plans of the government relating to climate change. The President of the Philippines shall serve as the Chairperson and will appoint three (3) Commissioners, one of whom will act as the Commission's vice-chairperson.

The Commission is tasked to formulate a Framework Strategy on Climate Change within six (6) months from its creation. This will serve as the basis for the program for climate change planning, research and development, extension, and monitoring of activities to protect vulnerable communities from the adverse effects of climate change and, at the same time, maximize the benefits of climate change.

The Framework shall be formulated in accordance with international agreements. To also ensure that such Framework keeps abreast with the changing demands of time, the same shall be reviewed every three (3) years or as may be deemed necessary.

The Commission's advisory board will be composed of the secretaries of the departments of agriculture, energy, environment, education, foreign affairs, health, local government, defense, public works, science, social welfare, trade and transportation; heads of National Economic and Development Authority, National Security Council, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, League of Provinces, League of Cities, League of Municipalities and Liga ng mga Barangay as well as representatives from the academe, business sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the disaster risk reduction community. The crucial involvement of local communities in addressing climate change is now recognized by this law.

R.A. 9729 likewise requires the Commission to formulate a National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) within one (1) year after the formulation of the Framework strategy. The local government units (LGUs) are also directed to formulate, plan, and implement climate change action plans in their respective areas. In the development and implementation of the NCCAP and the local action plans, the Commission is enjoined to coordinate with the NGOs, civic organizations, academe, people's organizations, the private and corporate sectors and other concerned stakeholder groups.

The law allots P50 million as initial operating fund in addition to the unutilized fund of the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change. The sum will be sourced from the President's contingent fund. **LF**



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