

# الخطيفة

## AL KHALIFA (THE STEWARD)



**What Every Muslim Needs  
to Know about His Role  
in Environmental Governance**



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## Al Khalifa (The Steward)

What Every Muslim Needs to Know  
About His Role in Environmental Governance

With an Endorsement by Sheikh Abdulwakil Tanjilil  
Director General/Deputy Mufti for Western Mindanao  
and Palawan

And an Islamic Declaration of Support:  
Khalifatul Ardh: Steward of the Earth - A Regional Islamic Summit  
on Environmental Governance for Islamic Leaders, the Academe and  
Community Advocates, Cotabato City, 24 Jamadil-Akhir 1428

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Cover photos: (insets, from top) Bobby Timonera, Bobby Timonera, Trina Isorena, Charlie Saceda, Davao Dive Group, Bobby Timonera; (mosque) Bobby Timonera.

EcoGov2 is a collaborative effort resulting from the bilateral agreement between the United States Government through USAID and the Government of the Philippines through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. EcoGov2 focuses on strengthening Local Government Units or LGUs so that they can carry out localized but strategic actions that aim to:

- Reduce overfishing and the use of destructive fishing practices;
- Reduce illegal logging and conversion of natural forests; and
- Improve the management of solid wastes and wastewater.

EcoGov 2 provides technical assistance to some 130 strategically located LGUs to enable them to plan and implement locally-financed environmental programs, while observing the principles of transparency, accountability and people's participation in all their decisions, transactions and actions.

The EcoGov2 project is managed by Development Alternatives, Inc. and its subcontractors:

- Cesar Virata & Associates, Inc.
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Emerging Markets
- The Marine Environment and Resources Foundation, Inc.
- The Media Network
- Orient Integrated Development Consultants, Inc.
- Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies, Inc.



*In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*

ENDORSEMENT OF THE *AL KHALIFA* SOURCEBOOK

*Responsible stewardship of the environment and natural resources  
constitutes spiritual obligation*

The Deputy Mufti for Western Mindanao and Palawan hereby endorses the use and citation of *AL KHALIFA* (THE STEWARD), a sourcebook on environmental governance based on Islamic teachings and practices. This is published by the Philippine Environmental Governance 2 Project of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The environment and its natural resources are Allah's gifts to mankind; He has made us the stewards of His Creation. Under the banner of Islam's universal system, Allah charged upon Muslims the responsibilities of vicegerents:

He it is Who has made you successors generations after generations in the earth, so whosoever disbelieves (in Islamic Monotheism) on him will be his disbelief. And the disbelief of the disbelievers adds nothing but hatred of their Lord. And the disbelief of the disbelievers adds nothing but loss.

- Holy Qur'an 35:39

As a Muslim, one should be aware of the responsibilities in the use of earth's natural resources and the care of the environment, and should enjoin his Muslim brothers,

whithersoever dispersed, to obey what Allah commands them to do, in relation to this.

The Philippine Environmental Governance Project has facilitated the formulation of AL KHALIFA (THE STEWARD), a valuable guide in practicing responsible environmental governance, which should benefit present and future generations.

The Office of the Deputy Grand Mufti of the Darul Ifta also hereby enjoins all concerned Muslims to propound the teachings from the AL KHALIFA in their daily activities, at home and in government, schools and mosques, work and leisure, and to consider all these as part of Islamic worship.

This 16<sup>th</sup> day of April 2007, corresponding to the 28<sup>th</sup> of Rabbil-Awwal 1428 in Zamboanga City.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wakil Tanjilil', written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

**SHEIKH ABDULWAKIL TANJILIL**

Director General/Deputy Mufti for Western Mindanao  
and Palawan

*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*

ISLAMIC DECLARATION OF SUPPORT  
FOR AL KHALIFA (THE STEWARD)

*Khalifatul Ardh: Steward of the Earth*  
*A Regional Islamic Summit on Environmental Governance for*  
*Islamic Leaders, the Academe and Community Advocates*  
*El Manuel Convention Center, Cotabato City*  
*24 Jamadil-Akhir 1428 (July 9, 2007)*

We, representing religious, political, academic, and civil society institutions, are deeply concerned by the threat of environmental degradation in the Western, Central and Southern Mindanao regions of the Philippines. Many areas in these regions are home to Muslim communities.

Thus, we are working to craft *Al Khalifa (The Steward)*, which we now endorse as a valuable guide for deepening the understanding and obligation of every Muslim to responsible environmental stewardship.

*Al Khalifa* is based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, and is inspired by the Islamic value of man as God's steward and trustee on earth.

The principles that *Al Khalifa* espouses are rightful approaches for protecting our coastal and forest resources, and for managing both solid and liquid waste. They are fully consistent with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ.

On behalf of our institutions, we commit to promote, disseminate, support, and adopt the principles in *Al Khalifa* in our task of educating leaders and followers in Muslim

communities that safeguarding the environment is part of man's responsibility as God's vicegerent on earth.

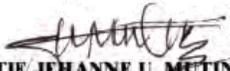
*Signed, this 24th day of Jamadil-Akhir 1428 (July 9, 2007)  
at El Manuel Convention Center, Cotabato City, Philippines.*

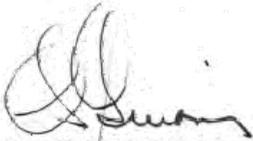
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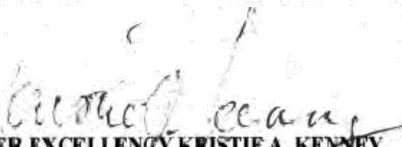
  
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## INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPRINT

THIS is a reprint of the guidebook, *Al Khalifa (The Steward): What Every Muslim Needs to Know about His Role in Environmental Governance*, published in June 2007. This reprint contains the full text of the original. Readers should note that it is **not yet a revised** edition.

The original edition contains several inadvertent typographical errors in the printing of the Arabic-language texts – an error resulting from unforeseen incompatibilities in font rendering between Arabic enabled and non-Arabic enabled computers. Revised editions of *Al Khalifa* will not only correct these font errors but will be **content-enhanced** editions revised under the careful supervision of the Assembly of the Darul Ifta of the Philippines.

Publication of this reprint follows the successful holding of *Khalifatul Ardh (Steward of the Earth)—A Regional Islamic Summit on Environmental Governance* on 22-24 Jamadil-Akhir 1428 (7-9 July 2007), in Cotabato City. Devoted largely to a discussion of the guidebook, this three-day summit saw the participation of more than 200 Filipino Muslim leaders and workers from religious groups, universities, schools, nongovernmental organizations, local governments, and regional legislatures.

Summit participants drew up specific recommendations on how the teachings of *Al Khalifa* could be applied to promote better protection of coastal and forest resources, and more effective management of local government programs on solid and liquid waste. Participants also appealed for steps to enhance the guidebook and explore ways—including popular translations in the various Filipino Muslim languages—to

make it more accessible to students, local government workers, and community people.

During the Summit's closing ceremony, prominent Filipino Muslim leaders from both government and civil society signed an "Islamic Declaration of Support for *Al Khalifa*. The full text of this Declaration is included in this reprint.

Soon after the summit, the Assembly of the Darul Ifta of the Philippines, the country's highest body for Islamic opinion and an active supporter of the summit, brought together a core group of *mufti* to thoroughly review the guidebook. The Darul Ifta has completed its review and is currently at work on an enhanced edition of *Al Khalifa*. Among the recommendations of the Darul Ifta is to release exclusively Arabic and English language versions for use in Muslim schools and mosques.

A group of influential educators in Mindanao—including faculty from prestigious institutions such as Notre Dame University, Mindanao State University, the University of Southern Mindanao, and heads of *madaris* (traditional Islamic schools)—issued a call to develop teaching modules and classroom material based on *Al Khalifa*.

For their part, Filipino Muslim political leaders of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao have added their endorsement of *Al Khalifa*. The ARMM governor and the mayor of Cotabato City have already instructed local government workers to study and apply its guidelines.



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NOTE ON ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS  
OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

All translations are from *The Noble Qur'an – English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Halili and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Madina, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Printing Corporation, December 1996).



*Man is  
God's  
steward and  
trustee on  
earth*



# INTRODUCTION

Nature is *ni'mah*, a blessed gift of Allah's bounty.

— Faruqi and Faruqi (1986)

MUSLIMS know that Islam embodies a code of conduct that circumscribes their wants and keeps their acts within due bounds. Frequently, however, many tend to forget that the source of all Islamic conduct is the *Qur'an*, and the *sunnah* and *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, peace be upon him. Muslims are enjoined to submit to the Qur'anic Law, or the *Shari'ah*, and to follow the ways of the Prophet ﷺ in their practice of Islam.

Through its Philippine Environmental Governance 2 Project (EcoGov 2), the U.S. Agency for International Development seeks to help revive this awareness by developing this easy-to-understand, ready-to-implement sourcebook on environmental governance, based on Qur'anic injunctions, the *sunnah*, and customary *Adat* laws.

Islam exemplifies rightful conduct and moral values based on strict compliance with the *Shari'ah*, the Divine Law. The Qur'an is the source of the *Shari'ah*. A more practical approach to exemplify these is the regulation of man's<sup>1</sup> life according to the *halal-haram* dichotomy — or what is morally allowed and forbidden, lawful and unlawful.

Man's activities, from his selection of the lawful food, to the determination of his source of income, and his use of natural resources for his benefit, must conform to these

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<sup>1</sup> This sourcebook follows Islamic scholarly convention in using words such as "man", "his", and "he" to refer to all persons, regardless of gender.

injunctions. The other principles governing rightful use of the world's resources and man's environment proceed from the relationship of man as God's vicegerent on earth, created to do His bidding and laws. In effect, man is God's steward and trustee on earth.

The sourcebook seeks to inspire readers on their role in good environmental governance — for example as leader and follower — through his responsibilities as such, and as enjoined by his faith.

The technical guidelines on resource management found in the sourcebook can be used as ready reference by the *ustadj* for *khutbah*, students and teachers for deeper understanding, leaders for policy guide and formulation, the home for its daily activity, and for the rest as part of religious obligations.

The objectives of the sourcebook are:

- a) To help local governments incorporate forest and forestland management, coastal resource management and urban environmental management into their programs for sound ecological governance, as well as highlight the principles of functionality, transparency, accountability and participation as rightful approaches in good governance, and as emphatically taught by the Qur'an.
- b) To educate both leaders and constituents in Muslim communities that ecological governance is part of man's responsibilities as God's vicegerent on earth, and that responsible use of natural resources is mandated by man's obligations as part of God's Creation.



Photo by: USAID/Bobby Timonera

- c) To enable every Muslim to participate in environmental governance through a clearer understanding and better appreciation of his responsibilities and accountabilities as prescribed by his religion.
- d) To advocate for environmental governance principles as a major thrust in peace and development in Muslim communities, and make these major components in local government programs, initiated by the local chief executives at the provincial, municipal and barangay levels, with support from the community and various local institutions.
- e) To help stakeholders in Muslim communities *internalize* these principles as necessary parts of the five pillars of Islam, referring to the *Shahadah*, or belief in

God (*Allah*), as the basic element of faith and religious obedience.

This sourcebook can be used to —

- Distinguish and assign responsibilities in environmental governance among the stakeholders, starting with the child, parent, and home, to community and other players in the municipality.
- Promote clearer participation in environmental governance of all stakeholders, and especially emphasize the principles of functionality, transparency, accountability and participation in all aspects of community life, from village activities to the municipality's governance agenda.
- Develop information, education and communication (IEC) materials and encourage study of Islamic perspectives on environmental governance among stakeholders in the community, to include discussions in the academe, business and public offices, religious community gatherings, and political leaders' forums.
- Mobilize religious leaders and *madaris*, as well as educational institutions, business entities and offices, civil society groups and law-enforcers, to support and adopt IEC materials on environmental governance in their forums, in formal and non-formal discussions, and other similar opportunities that call for IEC.

This sourcebook has three main themes. First, stewardship principles in Islam, or the concept of man's role in governance. Second, man and nature: environment *makes* the man, but man can *unmake* his environment. Third, technical methods and approaches on forest and forestland manage-

ment, coastal resource management and urban environmental management, and a review of community practices in environmental use — and abuse. These three themes highlight the following:

- Order in creation; man as the apex of created beings; his responsibilities as such; Islam and nature; man and nature.
- *Halal* and *haram*, or what man should do and must not do, as enjoined by injunctions from the Qur'an, and as exemplified by the *sunnah*, in all aspects of his activities.
- Emerging concerns and technical solutions to environment problems, and improving community practices so that barangays and homes can tackle serious problems of deforestation, coastal resource destruction and mismanagement of solid and water waste.

The sourcebook uses the Holy Qur'an as its main source for ethical analysis. It cites pertinent *surah* (chapter) and *ayah* (verses), to authenticate and substantiate the injunctions. The *sunnah*, or the prophetic tradition, illustrates experiences and events of rightful conduct performed by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The *hadith* refers to sayings attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. Together, these constitute the basis for a call to good environmental governance by adherents and practitioners of the religion.





*Islam  
establishes  
man's place  
in God's  
creation*



# CHAPTER 1

## STEWARDSHIP IN ISLAM: KHALIFA, TAWHEED, AKHIRA

ISLAM shapes the life of every Muslim. However, the understanding of the creed of Islam influences the extent of a Muslim's practices of truly Islamic tenets.

Islam also determines the extent of both positive and negative implications that may derive from these individual acts. In principle, Islam teaches righteousness of men and firm belief in the Creator of heaven and earth, and establishes man's place in God's creation.

Allah said in the Qur'an:

لينظر الإنسان مم خلق. (سورة الطارق: ٥)

So let the man see from what he is created.  
— Holy Qur'an 86:5

Proceeding from this are man's roles in relation to his worldly universe — that is, his interaction with the physical world, his environment and his duties to the same as his own assurance of spiritual happiness and reward.

A Muslim is one who believes in One God, and totally submits to His Will. All creations submit to His Law; every being is His Creation and thus held sacred. The Qur'an, the revealed Word of God, says that all in the heavens, earth and in between them are Signs and Manifestations of the Almighty God.

In the Qur'an:

له ما فى السماوات و ما فى الأرض و ما بينهما و ما تحت الثرى.  
(سورة طه: ٦)

To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and all that is between them, and all that is under the soil.

- Holy Qur'an 20:6

### **Man as God's Creation and His Khalifa on Earth**

Man occupies the apex of God's creation. His role on earth is to act as God's steward, and trustee, of the bounties of the earth, or everything found over and beneath it. He is a *Khalifa*, the vicegerent of God and has been honored by the Almighty in many ways. Allah gave them a special kind of knowledge, possessed not even by the angels of Allah and made them masters, if not the whole earth, at least of those creatures and substances that are useful for them.

As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

و لقد كرّمنا بنى آدم و حملناهم فى البر و البحر و رزقناهم من الطيبات  
و فضلناهم على كثير ممن خلقنا تفضيلا. (سورة الإسراء: ٧٠)

And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Tayyibat (lawful good things), and have preferred them to many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment.

- Holy Qur'an 17:70

Everything on earth becomes subservient to him. But he is not to destroy what his Master has created to be beautiful, useful and in total harmony. He must protect this instead. The

*Khalifa* becomes answerable for his actions, for the way he uses or abuses the trust of God.

For the Muslim, each generation of humankind is morally bound to leave behind a wholesome, sustainable environment.

In the Holy Qur'an:

هو الذي خلق لكم ما في الأرض جميعا. (سورة البقرة: ٢٩)

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth.

- Holy Qur'an 2:29

ولا تسرفوا إنه لا يحب المسرفين. (سورة الأنعام: ١٤١)

And waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifun (those who waste by extravagance).

- Holy Qur'an 6:141

But the status of man as Allah's vicegerent on earth does not give ground for arrogance or tyranny and wasting the resources entrusted to him by the Almighty.

Allah said:

و لا تمش في الأرض مرحا إنك لن تخرق الأرض و لن تبلغ الجبال طولا.  
(سورة الإسراء: ٣٧)

And walk not in the earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor you can attain a stature like the mountains in height.

- Holy Qur'an 17:37



Photo by: USAID/Charlie Saceda

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

Do not create harm so you will not be harmed.

In the pre-deployment orientation of the Prophet ﷺ to the Muslim army of his time, he would forbid them the harming of people that were non-party to the conflict, the elderly, the children and women (among them), as well as the synagogues and places of worship (of other religions) and *“not cutting the trees.”*

God created human beings, equipped them with the faculty of intellect, and made the whole universe subservient to them. Skills and resources are provided to men; some people and some nations move forward faster than others because of their ability to use these skills and resources more effectively and more efficiently. A nation’s success largely depends on leadership and motivation. Leadership is necessary for the success of any collective work. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

If there were three on a trip, they shall appoint a leader from among them.

- Reported by Abu Dawud

Leadership qualities are required; leadership skills are not only technical. In fact, behavioral skills are critical: leaders must be skillful and trustworthy, strong and faithful.

As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

إن خير من استنجرت القوى الأمين. (سورة القصص: ٢٦)

Verily, the best of men for you to hire is the strong, the trustworthy”

- Holy Qur'an 28:26

The performance of any group is defined and influenced by the quality of leadership. The *Khalifa* should assume the overall responsibility of his domain. Furthermore, leadership should be understood more as a service to the followers.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

Verily, the leader among you is the vicegerent of Allah on that community; he shall protect the rights of the wronged among the populace. If the leader judges justly he will receive the reward of Allah and the people should be grateful for it. While if the leader judges unjustly, he is sure to receive the Wrath from Allah and the people must be enduring and patient.

– Reported by Al-Baihaqi

Again:

The leader of people is their servant.

- Reported by Attabarani

Leaders are role models. Their actions speak louder than words. They have a responsibility to create and maintain a culture of good governance. If a leader works hard, his followers work as hard as he does. His credibility depends on how his deeds match his speech.

According to the Holy Qur'an:

يأيهاالذين آمنوا لم تقولون ما لا تفعلون.كبر مقتا عند الله أن تقولوا  
مالا تفعلون. (سورة الصف: ٢-٣)

O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do.

- Holy Qur'an 61:2-3

أ تأمرون الناس بالبِر و تنسون أنفسكم و أنتم تتلون الكتاب أفلا تعقلون.  
(سورة البقرة: ٤٤)

Enjoin you Al-Birr (piety and righteousness and each and every act of obedience to Allah) on the people and you forget (to practice it) yourselves, while you recite the Scripture! Have you then no sense?

- Holy Qur'an 2:44

Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam instructed Malik ibn Ashtar Al-Nakha'ie before dispatching to Egypt as its governor and said:

Know, O Malik that I am sending you to a country which has been subjected before you to both just and unjust rulers, and so the people will judge you in the same way now stand in judgment of your predecessors. Therefore, let good works be your assets. Discipline yourself and covet not that which is not rightly yours. Train your hearts to feel compassion for the people, to love them and be kind to them. Do not behave like a ferocious beast towards them,

snatching away their sustenance, for the people are of two categories; they are your brother in religion ad/or your fellow human being.

Humans are managers and administrators; the Qur'an warns that corruption will be prevalent on earth as a result of human disobedience of the Law of God. All creations follow only One law, the Law of God. Disobedience creates imbalance in nature, and leads to:

ظهر الفساد فى البر و البحر بما كسبت أيدي الناس ليذيقهم بعض الذى عملوا لعلهم يرجعون. (سورة الروم: ٤١)

Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deeds that) the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from evil).

- Holy Qur'an 30:41

One prominent scholar of Islam, Abol Aliyah, said:

Anyone who indulges in sinful acts on the surface of earth is indeed causing the destruction of this planet, because in truth, the earth's provision and everything in its atmosphere and the terrestrial region moves in sheer dependence upon man's faith and acquiescence of God's Commandments laid down by Islam.

## **Tawheed or the Concept of Oneness in Islam**

*La ilaha illallah*; There is no God but Allah.

This testimony of belief in One God is the crux of worship of every Muslim. The concept of unity in Islam, or *Tawheed*, comes from this firm belief in One God. This

grounds the practice of the religion to the unqualified, unequivocal belief in the Almighty.

*Tawheed* discourages any allusion to polytheism, either as a form of worship or reference to and comparison of authority and source of awe, power, wealth, and others. *Tawheed* promotes the idea of God as Master of the universe, and humankind is only a part of His creation.

Man is servant (*abd*) to do God's bidding; he is God's *khalifa* to protect the environment, not to destroy it. Man is to utilize natural resources, not to abuse these bounties and assume lordship over fellowmen. Islam is also monotheistic in that sense of guiding human acts to be within the bounds of ethical conduct, moral righteousness, and social justice, under strict awareness of man's worship of One God.

The strong belief in One God negates any comparison with the Master. He is Creator, One and Only. The universe is His Creation, and as such, any human thought or act that tends to delude this attribute of the origin of creation directly violates man's relationship with his Creator. *To believe firmly is to submit unequivocally; to be God's khalifa is to faithfully perform one's duty as trustee and steward of His Creation.*

In the Qur'an Allah said:

اعلموا أن الله يحيي الأرض بعد موتها قد بينا لكم الآيات لعلكم تعقلون.  
(سورة الحديد: ١٧)

Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death! Indeed We have made clear the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) to you, if you but understand.

- Holy Qur'an 57:17



Photo by: USAID/Charlie Saceda

## Akhira and the Concept of Accountability

A Muslim faces his Creator in the hereafter, to account for deeds done and duties unaccomplished. *Akhira* is his Day of Reckoning.

Humankind will be judged in the hereafter for deeds done on earth: we become *accountable* for our deeds as well as for our acts of omission. The *khalifa*, or steward, will render an account of how he treated the trust of God, on the Day of Reckoning. *Akhira* is the notion of the Day of Reckoning that describes the accountability of the *khalifa*.

As mentioned in the Qur'an:

الله الذي خلق السماوات والأرض وأنزل من السماء ماء فأخرج به من  
الثمرات رزقاكم و سخر لكم الفلك لتجرى فى البحر بأمره و سخر لكم  
الأنهار. و سخر لكم الشمس والقمر دائبين و سخر لكم الليل والنهار. و آتاكم من  
كل ما سألتموه. و إن تعدوا نعمت الله لا تحصوها. إن الإنسان لظلوم  
كفار. (سورة إبراهيم: ٣٢-٤٣ )

Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sends down (rain) from the sky, and thereby brought forth fruits as provision for you; and He has made the ships to be of service to you, that they may sail through the sea by His Command; and He has rivers (also) to be of service to you.

- Holy Qur'an 14:32-34

*Akhira* therefore summarizes all earthly deeds of man, in a setting where a final judgment and absolute justice become inevitable. A Muslim faces his Almighty in this reckoning, that his reward be given or punishment meted. The *Khalifa* submits totally to his Master, the Almighty. In this light, we say:

- The leader becomes accountable and answers for his acts as leader.
- The follower becomes accountable for his compliance with orders and laws of society, especially the Law of God.
- The teacher becomes accountable for imparting knowledge to his learners.
- The learner becomes accountable for seeking knowledge and using this rightfully, to promote himself, his fellowmen and his environment.
- The parent becomes accountable for the upbringing of the children; the children must obey the rules of the home, giving due piety and remembering to *worship* the Almighty.
- The community is responsible for the welfare of its members, and answers for the general welfare; its

members participate in arriving at a consensus, where community welfare, security, sanitation and health, peace and order, environmental concerns, and others are involved, and seek resolution of problems appertaining to these.

- Government becomes accountable to the governed, and must display all acts that constitute good governance principles; the constituents must insist that their government become *transparent, accountable, participatory, and functional*.

Allah said:

و هو الذي جعلكم خلائف الأرض. (سورة الأنعام : ١٦٥)

And it is He Who has made you generations,  
replacing each other on the earth.

- Holy Qur'an 6:165





*Islamic  
governance  
emphasizes  
man's role as  
God's  
vicegerent on  
earth*



## CHAPTER 2

# PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AMONG MUSLIMS

*GOOD governance principles* emphasize transparency, accountability and people's participation. Among local government units, *good governance functions* include setting up mechanisms, where there are none, to support these principles:

- enactment of good laws;
- enforcement of these laws;
- preparation of budget needs and project requirements; and,
- budget allocation for program implementation.

Good governance principles, however, cut across different levels and groups in the society, such as the home, community, business sector, academe, religious and political affiliations, the young and old alike.

Good governance demands, among other things, consistency of purpose, strong political will, community acceptance and involvement, and civil society participation. It even includes a strong sense of social justice.

Its principles transcend all political and religious affiliations, and it particularly insists on addressing human welfare and the human development agenda.

Islamic governance repeats these principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and more. It provides a holistic approach to human conduct in relation to man's immediate milieu: human, animal, mineral, and plant

environments. It ties man down to moral and ethical grounds, and links him with his Master, the Almighty God.

Islamic governance is primarily derived from Islamic Law or the Islamic *Shari'ah* whose primary sources are the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It emphasizes man's role as God's vicegerent on earth, and as such, heightens man's spiritual goals and sanctifies his acts. The Islamic injunction goes:

Seek your earthly goals as if you will live forever; seek your paradise as if you will die tomorrow.

Islam is a monotheistic religion characterized by the acceptance of the doctrine of submission to God, and belief that Muhammad ﷺ is the messenger and last prophet of God. Islamic governance implements all the concepts, standard and convictions for the implementation of the Islamic rules, dependent on Islamic Creed, and all derived from the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. God made it imperative for rulers to govern according to what He has sent down to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

In the Qur'an, Allah said:

و أن احكم بينهم بما أنزل الله و لا تتبع أهواءهم واحذرهم أن يفتنوك عن بعض ما أنزل الله إليك فإن تولوا فاعلم أنما يريد الله أن يصيبهم ببعض ذنوبهم و إن كثيرا من الناس لفاسقون. (سورة المائدة: ٤٩)

And so judge (you O Muhammad) among them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they run to you (O Muhammad) far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, then know that Allah's Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And

truly, most of men are *Fasiqun* (rebellious and disobedient to Allah).

- Holy Qur'an 5:49

Islamic governance principles also highlight man's inter-relationship with fellow men, and view man's roles from the different levels of his involvement or engagement. Rulers are expected to be just without becoming weak or equivocal; followers must obey the laws of the land, in addition to being adherent to the Law of God, as revealed in the Qur'an.

Allah the Most High says:

إن الله يأمركم أن تؤدوا الأمانات إلى أهلها و إن حكمتم بين الناس أن تحكموا بالعدل إن الله نعما يعظكم به إن الله كان سميعا بصيرا.(سورة النساء: ٥٨)

Verily! Allah Commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is ever All-Hearer, All-Seer.

- Holy Qur'an 4:58)

The home, as a nucleus of family and community activities, delineates respective duties of father, mother, children, grandparents and kin so that harmony could be achieved, and the general welfare promoted. The community for its part, enjoins each member to participate and consult, in the interest of all, and according to the best practices in governance.

إن الله يأمر بالعدل والإحسان وإيتاء ذى القربى وينهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر والبغى يعظكم لعلكم تذكرون. (سورة النحل: ٩٠)

Verily, Allah enjoins *Al-Adl* (i.e., justice and worshiping none but Allah Alone-Islamic Monotheism) and *Al-Ihsan* (i.e., to be patient in

performing your duties to Allah's sake and in accordance with Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e., all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help), and forbids *Al-Fahsha* (i.e., all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience to parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right), and *Al-Munkar* (i.e., all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds), and *Al-Baghy* (i.e., all kinds of oppressions). He admonishes you, that you may take heed).

- Holy Qur'an 16:90

و الذين استجابوا لربهم و أقاموا الصلاة و أمرهم شورى بينهم و مما رزقناهم  
ينفقون. (سورة الشورى: ٣٨)

And those who answer the Call of their Lord (are) those who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them."

- Holy Qur'an 42:38

## Transparency

There is *transparency* when the general public has access to timely, relevant, accurate, understandable and complete information about governance operations.

Transparency in Islam is linked to trust, a virtue that prevailed in the relationships among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Mutual trust existed between the leaders and the followers, and among the followers. This trust is supported by openness and directness, or where accessibility to information, assistance, advice and others is the link of governance.

Allah the Most High says:

إن الله يأمركم أن تؤدوا الأمانات إلى أهلها و إن حكمتم بين الناس أن تحكموا  
بالعدل إن الله نعماً يعظكم به إن الله كان سميعاً بصيراً. (سورة النساء: ٥٨)

Verily! Allah Commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is ever All-Hearer, All-Seer.

- Holy Qur'an 4:58

In another verse of the Qur'an, Allah, the Almighty strongly emphasized that in conduct of day to day activity of the Muslim, the rulers are expected to shun all forms of suspicions, misgivings, distrust and ill-feelings to his governed.

As mentioned in the Qur'an:

يأياهاالذين آمنوا اجتنبوا كثيرا من الظن إن بعض الظن إثم و لا تجسسوا و لا  
يغتب بعضكم بعضا. (سورة الحجرات: ١٢)

O you believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. Any spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.

- Holy Qur'an 49:12

On the other hand, Islam enjoins doing what is good and forbidding what is evil. Righting the wrong is the duty of every Muslim. This is even more emphasized when the perpetrator has a great deal of power and authority.



Photo by: USAID/Charlie Saceda

Allah said:

ولتكن منكم أمة يدعون إلى الخير و يأمرون بالمعروف و ينهون عن المنكر و أولئك هم المفلحون. (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٤)

Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining *Al-Ma'ruf* (i.e., Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding *Al-Munkar* (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are successful.

- Holy Qur'an 3:104

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Whosoever sees wrong should correct it by his hand. If he fails to do so, by his tongue. And if he still fails to do so, then by his heart, but that is the weakest Iman (faith).

- Reported by Muslim

## Accountability

There is *accountability* when local government officials can be rewarded or penalized for their actions, based on an objective assessment of their performance vis-à-vis set targets and standards. In Islam, every person is accountable and responsible. His faculty of intellect even more stresses this responsibility and accountability for his deed and acts, even when working in groups.

Allah specifically mentioned in the Qur'an:

كل نفس بما كسبت رهينة إلا أصحاب اليمين. (سورة المدثر: ٣٨-٣٩)

Every person is a pledge for what He has earned; Except those on the right, (i.e., the pious true believers of Islamic Monotheism)

- Holy Qur'an 74:36-39

فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة خيرا يره و من يعمل مثقال ذرة شرا يره. (سورة الزلزلة: ٧-٨)

Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, shall see good. And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see evil.

- Holy Qur'an 99:7-8

So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it; And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it.

## People's Participation

There is *people's participation* when the general public is effectively and meaningfully able to take part in governance processes (e.g., plan formulation) that lead to key actions or decisions – an example is approval of a Solid Waste Management plan.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ created a culture of good governance, among his followers. He employed consultation with his followers to decide major issues. Participative management was his method; it is a continuous involvement of people in decision making. From the prophetic example, consultation has become an Islamic duty for a leader, to solicit the involvement and participation of his followers about issues and decisions that affect the community or the nation. This is known as *Shura*, or consultation.

This is mentioned in the Qur'an:

و الذين استجابوا لربهم و أقاموا الصلوة و أمرهم شورى بينهم و مما  
رزقناهم ينفقون.(سورة الشورى: ٣٨)

And those who answer the Call of their Lord [i.e., to believe that He is the only One Lord (Allah), and to worship none but Him alone], and perform *As-Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*), and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.

- Holy Qur'an 42:38

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

My nation cannot agree upon an error and if a conflict persists, be with the majority.

- Reported by Ibnu Majah

The scope of consultation must be as wide as possible. It must serve the interest of all stakeholders. Participative governance proved to be the cornerstone of the Prophet's success in promoting Islam in his time and in the succeeding generations.

## Halal and Haram Dichotomy

Islam has a strong ethical code of conduct. It divides man's acts into a dichotomy of *halal* and *haram*, or the "do's" and "don'ts", the lawful and the unlawful in the religion. The first principle, or *asl*, established in Islam is that the things God created and the benefits derived from them are essentially for the use of man, and therefore are permissible and lawful. Nothing is *haram* except what is prohibited by a sound *surah* of the Qur'an and explicit *hadith*. Scholars of Islam cite the Qur'an when referring to this principle of natural usability and permissibility of things:

هو الذي خلق لكم ما في الأرض جميعا (سورة البقرة: ٢٩)

He it is Who created for you all that is on earth.

- Holy Qur'an 2:29

و سخر لكم ما فى السماوات و ما فى الأرض جميعا منه. (سورة  
الجاثية: ١٣)

And has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favor and kindness from him.

- Holy Qur'an 45:13

ألم تروا أن الله سخر لكم ما فى السموات و ما فى الأرض و  
أسبغ عليكم نعمه، ظاهرة و باطنة. (سورة لقمان: ٢٠)

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and what is on earth, and has showered upon you His favors, both apparent and unseen?

- Holy Qur'an 31:20

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

I swear by Allah (SWT) in whose hands is my life. When a person eats a tiny piece of an item which is haram, none of his deeds are accepted by Allah (SWT) for forty days. When the flesh of the body is built from haram then his body only deserves the hell fire.

- Reported by Muslim

Because food is essential to man's daily life, *halal* or *haram* is closely identified with it, although the injunction covers all human acts and deeds. Food source and the means to access it also fall under this dichotomy. For example, blast-fishing is *haram* as a source of livelihood for a Muslim fisherman. This method of fishing destroys the balance in nature and its harmony of aqua-life. It also deprives other fishers from sharing the natural bounty of the sea. This same dichotomy cuts across all human acts, permeating all the roles of man in his interaction with his fellowmen and his environments.

Man as leader is governed by the same ethical conduct. To do anything outside of a given act or identified virtue as leader to his follower, is to commit *haram* act or unlawful act according to God; corruption in government service is *haram*, because one unduly gets for himself what is not properly his or his due. Consultation (*shura*) in governance is a desired

conduct, as done by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his followers. These are examples of things we mention to emphasize the moral dimension of daily life in Islam.

The Qur'an states what is lawful and unlawful to man, as directed by God. The Almighty has distinguished these so that man will continue to be guided, because man is weak, and may go astray.

In this regard, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

What Allah has made lawful in His Book is *halal*, and what He has forbidden is *haram*, and that concerning which He is silent is allowed in His favor. So accept from Allah His favor, for Allah is not forgetful of anything. He then recited:

و ما كان ربك نسيا. (سورة مريم: ٦٤)

And your Lord is never forgetful.  
- Holy Qur'an 19:64

This *hadith* was reported by al-Hakim, classified as *sahih* (sound) and quoted by al-Bassar.





*Islam maintains  
a tradition of  
respect for  
nature and the  
environment*



## CHAPTER 3

### ISLAM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ALLAH said in the Glorious Qur'an:

و الأرض مددناها و ألقينا فيها رواسي و أنبتنا فيها من كل  
شيئ موزون. و جعلنا لكم فيها معاش و من لستم له برازقين.  
(سورة الحجر: ١٩-٢٠)

And the earth We have spread out, and have placed therein firm mountains, and caused to grow therein all kinds in due proportion.

- Holy Qur'an 15:19

The Prophet of Islam ﷺ said:

The world is a green and pleasant thing. Allah has left you in charge of it (*mustakhlifukum fiha*) and looks at how you behave.

- Reported by Muslim

The widespread and escalating destruction of nature is the great moral and spiritual issue of our time. There is a need to go back to nature for appreciation and spiritual rebirth. This can be done by considering the issue of sustainable use of our environment as a moral obligation of everyone and not simply as a livelihood question.

Religion, far more than governmental bodies or pressure groups, has a more fundamental role to play in this respect. Islam speaks with more authority than conservation works alone. Legislation can be more effective if it has the force of religious and moral sanctions, together with the community's cultural and intellectual heritage and aspirations.

Islam maintains a tradition of conservation, respect for nature and the environment, and kindness to other living creatures. However, these are little known and seldom discussed, much less practiced and observed. Islamic spirituality and mysticism speak of man's bond to creation, and in this case, with nature.

The true essence of Islamic teaching is tied to man's relationship with the entire universe, which is God's Creation. Peace in Islam means man's submission to the peace of his universe, not simply with himself, but with the rest of humanity and with God.

Islam promotes the unity principle. It promotes the integrity of the Earth. Unity can not exist through discord between man and man, man and nature; it is not realized by setting one's need against another's or letting one predominate over another. It is about balance and harmony. It is about the middle path.

The injunctions of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions emphasize the balanced order of nature, and the universe, thus:

The Qur'an thus says:

إن في خلق السموات والأرض و اختلاف الليل و النهار لآيات لأولى الألباب.(سورة آل عمران:١٩٠)

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alteration of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding.

- Holy Qur'an 3:190



Photo by: USAID/Michelle Baird

The balanced order in nature has, time and again, been mentioned and expounded by sages in Islam. The Qur'an itself has chapters named after animals, and many *hadiths* commend kindness to them. The Prophet was to have said, "All creatures are God's dependants, and the most beloved to God, among them, is he who does good to God's dependants."

The inherent relationship between faith and the environment finds symbolic expression in the various Islamic regular rituals. Prayer, for example, is timed according to the earth's planetary movement; *haj* or pilgrimage is timed according to the seasons, and water is an essential element used to prepare the believer physically and spiritually.

Fasting during the lunar month of Ramadhan allows each Muslim to experience the rigors of hunger, as experienced in every corner of the world, through the changing seasons of the year. Muslims are taught to be brothers; all believers are brethren. To understand the influence of the environment on all humankind is to affirm the unity of this brotherhood of men, under God.

Water, as seen in Islam, is the basis of all life on earth. The word *Shari'ah*, or the Islamic Law, means "the road to the watering place". Water is a source of life and the *Shari'ah* is the source of knowledge about life, death and hereafter.

It might be said that the study of the universe by Muslim scholars found Islam in the forefront of scientific knowledge and discoveries, clearly paving the reconciliation between science and religion. Islamic morals define and repeat man's relationship to his universe, recognizing his role as part of it.

The *Fatiha*, or the seven oft-repeated verses of the opening *surah* of the Qur'an, puts this beautifully:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الرحمن الرحيم. مالك يوم الدين.  
إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين.  
إهدنا الصراط المستقيم.  
صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين.  
(سورة الفاتحة: ١-٧)

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jin and all that exists). The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; The only owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection). You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). Guide us to the straight Way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray.

- Holy Qur'an 1:7





*Poor  
governance  
contributes to  
ineffective  
management of  
the country's  
natural  
resources*



## CHAPTER 4

### MORALS AND METHODS

OVER the last 30 years, the Philippines has undergone a catastrophic degradation of its environment and natural resources. Consider the following:

- Only 18% remains of the country's forest cover; 32 % or 3.4 million hectares were lost between 1990 and 2005.
- Less than 15% of the country's reefs are in excellent condition; fishery productivity has declined drastically in major fishing grounds and near shore areas.
- Almost 60% of all groundwater is contaminated, posing severe health risks.
- Almost 10 million metric tons of solid wastes are disposed of improperly each year. Less than 40% is collected; the rest clogs rivers and streets.
- The causes of degradation are well-known: illegal logging and conversion of forest lands to other uses; over-fishing and use of destructive fishing methods; and inefficient management of solid waste and wastewater.

Poor governance contributes significantly to the ineffective management of the country's environment and natural resources. At the local level, local government units with limited funds struggle to comply with mandated programs, and often unable to fully observe transparency, accountability and participatory decision-making. At the national level, governance takes the form of centralized decision making and policies that are oftentimes not attuned to local realities.

Environmental governance covers at least three areas of concern: forests and forestlands, coastal and marine resources, and urban solid and water wastes. All three constitute greater

challenge in governance in terms of their effective management and efficient use or utility.

Government units, as well as officials who head these units, are confronted by the lack of economic and budgetary means to fully pursue long-term environmental programs. The lack of political will, including the inconsistency of law enforcement and prosecution of violators, add to the slow response to forest and forestland protection, fisheries and marine violations, and urban wastes problems, which border on sanitation and health issues.

There is a need for serious community action. In Muslim areas, these environmental problems compound with the lack of right attitude, information and committed responsibilities by both the government executives and the governed. The task to draw a clear line between moral responsibilities and technical capabilities falls on each and everyone who lives in the locality.

The Qur'an defines the moral standpoint. Among the core principles developed in the *Shari'ah* that pertain to the environment are the following:

In terms of *legislation*:

- There is a restricted right to public property.
- Abuse of rights is prohibited and penalized.
- There are rights to the benefits derived from natural resources held in common.
- Scarce resource utilization is controlled.
- The common welfare is protected.

In terms of *institutions*:

- Land grants (*iqta'*) may be made by the state for reclamation and development.

- Special reserves (*hima*) may be established by the state for use as conservation zones.
- The state may establish inviolable zones (*al-harim*) where use is prohibited or restricted.
- Makkah and Madinah are known as the two inviolable sanctuaries (*al-haramain*) where trees cannot be cut down and animals are protected from harm within their boundaries. They serve as examples of best practice.

In terms of *enforcement*:

- The primary duty of the Islamic state is to promote the good and forbid wrongdoing.
- As part of these functions, it has the mandate to protect land and natural resources from abuse and misuse.

Technical know-how must reinforce Islamic values of managing the environment. In the end, each member of the community must be able to meaningfully contribute to environmental governance, as a fulfillment of his or her obligation.

Chapters 5 to 7 of this sourcebook offer technical guides that could address environmental management of forest and forestlands, coastal and marine resources, and urban waste problems. The more fundamental principles hinge on the moral laws that emanate from the *Shari'ah*, as derived from the Qur'an.

Muslim communities are reminded by these laws, in keeping with their practice of Islam. All told, these Islamic principles on environmental governance, must by their own reasons, be accepted and practiced by whosoever wish to call themselves Muslims, or rightly, believers of God.





*Forests benefit  
not only human  
beings but  
provide food  
and shelter to  
other living  
things as well*



## CHAPTER 5

### BRINGING BACK THE FORESTS

WHAT is our future without our forests? What is the future of our forests? Forests affect our lives deeply. They are our primary source of water. They provide food and livelihood, construction materials, and are good sources of medicine and fuel.

Forest Cover in Mindanao, as of 31 December 2003, in Hectares					
	Closed forest	Open forest	Mangrove	Plantation	Total Forest
Zamboanga peninsula	29,652	126,790	22,278	3,474	182,194
Northern Mindanao	107,071	226,400	2,492	1,530	337,493
Davao region	177,503	240,986	2,010	536	421,035
Soccsksargen	126,385	218,858	1,350	2,641	349,234
Caraga	64,729	431,832	26,731	—	523,292
ARMM	106,319	96,661	45,786	1,580	250,346
TOTAL:					2,063,594

*Source: Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.*

Total forest cover in Mindanao was estimated at 2.06 million hectares at the end of 2003. In ARMM, which has a population of about three million, the majority of people depend on forest resources for survival. Any irresponsible use of forest resources here will have serious environmental and human consequences.

Forests benefit not only human beings but provide food and shelter to animals and other living things as well. The forest ecosystem makes possible the diversity in flora and fauna, which essentially contributes to the balance in nature. Forests are the natural habitat of God's other creations, some

of which are now endangered due to man's abuse. Among the many vulnerable species that make their homes in Mindanao are the Philippine eagle, Philippine deer, Philippine flying lemur, Philippine tree shrew, and the Mindanao moonrat.

Sound forest and forestland management is the most effective way to stop the loss of our forest and forestlands, and to put these lands into productive use. Persistent deforestation continues to occur through the wanton cutting of trees, illegal logging operations and disregard for the general welfare. Conversion of forestlands for other uses has grown alarmingly. Today, we witness the balding of mountains and the almost unstoppable erosion of mountainsides.

How then do we respond? In the sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Muslims find the embodiment of Qur'anic guidance:

Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded.

If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of it is charity on his part.

Whoever brings dead land to life, that is, cultivates wasteland, for him is a reward therein.

In the ARMM, a bold and pioneering response was made through Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 161 — “An Act Providing for Sustainable Forest Management in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and for Other Purposes” (MMAA). Passed on the 27th of October 2003, this law is a historic national model because it is the first law on sustainable forest management in the Philippines.



Photo by: USAID/Emilio Ballela

The Act is based firmly on established principles of *Shari'ah*, customary *Adat* laws and community-based management approaches. It was developed with the advice and participation of local government units, Muslim legal specialists, social scientists and community leaders.

Among the Act's basic policies is forest management as *khalifah* (stewardship) and *amanah* (trust).

The conservation, protection, constructive utilization, management, and development of forestlands and their resources shall be considered as a Divine trust and the people

involved in those duties and obligations shall be considered as stewards or trustees who are not only responsible to the State, the people, and the Region but are also accountable to Almighty God.

- Chapter I, Section 3(d), MMAA No. 161

The Act also identifies Community-Based Forest Management and Community Forest Management as principal strategies. It clearly gives preferential rights to community people on the use and management of their forest resources.<sup>2</sup>

Rights to access and responsibilities shall be vested upon local communities and the inhabitants of the Region to promote the sustainable management and development of forestlands and their resources, specially in production forestlands and multiple-use and buffer zones in protected areas. These shall have precedence over the other strategies.

- Chapter I, Section 3(e), MMAA No. 161

These two policies belong to the Act's set of 12 basic policies and strategies that are founded on the Islam ethic of promoting the involvement of individuals and communities in the development of the land for cultivation and good use. The rest of the basic policies and strategies are as follows:

- Sustainable and integrated management of forest resources as the guiding policy

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<sup>2</sup> Is the concept of ancestral domain compatible with the Islamic practice of land rights? In Islam, nobody owns the land so that in some Islamic countries, land is not titled (an example is Libya). The operative practice is stewardship; land title is just a piece of paper but *use* of the land is exclusive (or there is a presumption or claim of exclusivity). In the Philippine setting, this concept of stewardship is applied in forestlands and coastal resources, although not consistent with alienable and disposable lands.

- Permanency of forestland limits
- Forest resources to promote the common good
- Watershed as a basic planning unit
- Multi-sectoral participation
- Protection of forestlands and natural resources as priority concern
- Reforestation as a priority activity (seen as consistent with the *Shari'ah* concepts of *tahsin al-ardh* (duty of the community to beautify the environment) and *ihya al-mawat* (giving life to dead lands))
- Security of tenure of stakeholders
- Professionalism in the forest service (seen as consistent with the *Shari'ah* principles of '*Amr bi 'l-ma'ruf* and *Nahi 'ani 'l-munkar* or enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong)
- Principles of good governance (transparency, accountability and participatory democracy)

### **Recommended Practices**

- a) Pursue sustainable forest management by maintaining forests in their productive condition.
- b) Establish national parks and protected areas.
- c) Assign property rights to upland communities to protect and manage forestlands.
- d) Identify areas for economic benefits.

- e) Implement programs to promote and develop livelihood.
- f) Maintain areas such as wilderness, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water free from pollution.
- g) Practice bio-diversity conservation.

### **Unlawful (*Haram*) Practices**

- a) Cutting, gathering and collecting of timber and other products in publicly-owned lands without license or authority.
- b) Clearing of forests.
- c) *Kaingin*-making or *kaingin*-burning, or slash and burn or shifting cultivation inside forestland.
- d) Commercial logging in protected forests.
- e) Illegal occupation of National Integrated Protected Areas System, and vandalism.
- f) Hunting of wildlife such as eagle, monkeys, deer, alligators and birds.
- g) Collection of endangered species, such as orchids, pitcher plants, or giant ferns from natural forests.
- h) Cutting of mangroves.
- i) Poisoning of river waters.
- j) Illegal quarrying (if inside forestland).<sup>3</sup>
- k) Gathering of cave resources, such as stalagmites and stalactites, and vandalism of forest caves.
- l) Throwing of waste, or dumping of garbage and wastes in rivers.

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<sup>3</sup> However, it should be noted that small-scale mining is acceptable practice inside forestlands provided that on and off-site damages and negative external effects are mitigated.

As Allah said in the Holy Qur'an:

و هو الذى مد الأرض و جعل فيها رواسى و أنهارا و من كل الثمرات  
جعل فيها زوجين اثنين يغشى الليل النهار إن فى ذلك لآيات لقوم  
يتفكرون. (سورة الرعد: ١٣)

And it is He who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains standing firm, and rivers, and of every kind of fruits and He made zawjain ithnaini (two in pairs – may mean two kinds or it may mean two kinds or it may mean; of two varieties, e.g., black and white, sweet and sour, small and big). He brings the night as a cover over the day. Verily, in these things, there are Ayats (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc) for the people who understand.

- Holy Qur'an 13:3





*70% of  
Filipinos  
depends on  
marine and  
coastal  
resources for  
food and  
livelihood*



## CHAPTER 6

### SUSTAINING LIFE THROUGH A SEA CHANGE

ALLAH said:

و جعلنا من الماء كل شئ حي. (سورة الأنبياء: ٣٠)

And We have made from water every living thing.

- Holy Qur'an 21:30

الله الذى سخر لكم البحر لتجرى الفلك فيه بأمره و لتبتغوا من فضله  
و لعلكم تشكرون. (سورة الجاثية: ١٢)

Allah, it is He Who has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be thankful.

- Holy Qur'an 45:12

Coastal marine ecosystems cover estuaries, mangroves, sea-grasses and coral reef areas. These areas are the sources of marine products and diverse fishery resources.

They serve as nurseries and feeding grounds for fish and other marine vertebrates and invertebrates. Mangroves and sea-grasses prevent soil erosion and stabilize coastal areas.

Coral reefs and mangroves serve as buffer for wave action and protect coastlines. Further, these ecosystems provide areas for recreation and tourism.

But these ecosystems are also considered as critical areas since they are in the center of population and development. These areas have become highly impacted due to over exploitation of fishery resources, coupled with unregulated industrial development.

About 70% of the Philippine population depends on marine and coastal resources for food and livelihood. Half of the country's municipalities are coastal municipalities. The stress on the use of these resources has increased faster than the rate of rehabilitation and protection.

Mindanao Fish Production, by Sector and Region, 2003 (in Metric Tons)				
	Commercial	Municipal	Aquaculture	Total
Zamboanga peninsula	211,953	125,818	120,999	458,770
Northern Mindanao	39,528	30,354	31,401	101,283
Davao region	12,415	29,869	11,554	53,838
Soccksargen	179,001	39,820	23,017	241,838
Caraga	4,676	66,171	22,615	93,462
ARMM	79,862	78,922	400,580	559,364
TOTAL:	1,109,636	1,055,143	1,454,503	3,619,282

*Source: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.*

In its 2004 report, the Mindanao Economic Development Council noted with concern that “fishery resources are somehow becoming scarce in municipal waters, bays, and even in BFAR fishery management areas due to destructive fishing gears and other gadgets used illegally by some municipal, small, medium and large scale commercial fishers.”

Islam clearly rejects the overexploitation of all natural resources, including coastal resources. In *Environmental Protection in Islam*, a book written by a group of prominent Islamic scientists, the authors write that —

God has also shown us other functions of lake, sea, and ocean water. He has made it the habitat of many created beings, which play vital roles in the perpetuation of life and the development of this world. God has said, "It is He Who has made the sea of service, that you may eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender, and that you may bring forth from it ornaments to wear, and you see the ships therein that plough the waves, that you may seek of His bounty." He also says, "Lawful to you is the pursuit of water-game and its use for food a provision for you, and for those who travel."<sup>4</sup>

To address the dangers that arise from man's use or abuse of this ecosystem, there is an urgent need to carefully manage coastal and marine resources. Coastal local government units need to involve their citizens on the sustainable use of these resources to avoid eventual loss and destruction. The most affected are the fisherfolk, who are among the most marginalized sectors in the country.

Coastal and marine resource management needs a system of utilization, protection and rehabilitation. We have to insure the sustainable development of the coastal areas, with everyone involved.

Local executives, down to the barangay and community members, must fulfill their share of responsibilities, as conscientious users and protectors of this ecosystem. This is in keeping with man's moral obligation to be God's trustee and steward of the environment.

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<sup>4</sup> *Environmental Protection in Islam*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition(1993). Prepared by Dr. Bagader, Abubakr Ahmed (Professor of sociology, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah); Dr. El-Sabbagh, Abdullatif Tawfik El-Chirazi (Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah); Dr. Al-Glayand, Mohamad As-Sayyid (Egypt Professor of Islamics, Dar Al-Uluum, University of Cairo, Egypt); Dr. Samarrai, Mawil Yousuffzzi-Deen (Professor of Islamics, Cardiff, United Kingdom).

## Recommended Practices

- a) To be God's *khalifa* is to faithfully perform one's duty as trustee and steward of His Creation. This is the spirit with which an LGU is enjoined to comply with existing national law calling for the creation and institutionalization of an office to manage coastal resources and their ecosystems. If no such initiative is forthcoming from the LGU, then it becomes the option of the community to lobby their LGU for such an office.

The law that mandates LGUs to set up a coastal resource management office is actually a response to an expressed desire of coastal communities to participate in coastal resource management. It does not necessarily mean creating a brand new office from scratch.

The spirit of the law makes it clear that the task of creating this new office is clearly the responsibility of communities.

It should make use of existing Islamic community institutions, such as the organization of imams, the madras, or the village chiefs. It is critical that Islamic community institutions have ownership of such an office because this will give it the weight of Islamic value – more important to Muslim communities than technical recommendations.

- b) Formulation and implementation of a coastal resource management plan based on principles of sustainability.
- c) Enforcement of all national and local fishery laws.



Photo by: USAID/Michelle Baird

- d) Issuance of *Fatwah*<sup>5</sup> by the Darul-Ifta<sup>6</sup> supported by barangay and municipal sanggunian ordinance, on recommended fisheries and coastal management, highlighting penalties on violations and rewards on compliance.

As a religious instrument, a Fatwah's application is mainly personal. To operationalize a Fatwah, it must be supported by a public issuance (e.g., a local ordinance, a national law, etc.). The body issuing the

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<sup>5</sup> The word "Fatwa" means an answer to a question irrespective of whether such question relates to an issue of Shariah or not. Thereafter, the word acquired a technical meaning in the sense that it was confined to an answer given in response to a question relating to an issue of Shariah or Islam.

<sup>6</sup> "Darul-Ifta" is an Arabic word that can be translated as the House of Islamic/legal opinion. This is the assembly of the most senior Ulama and the most recognized Muslim scholars in the community and who deliberate, discuss, reflect and interpret issues and concern on matters related to Islam.

ordinance (such as a Sanggunian) should demonstrate that it is open to its laws being supported by religious values. There should be a complementation of the Fatwah and the ordinance.

Here, the Fatwah becomes the source of moral authority for the ordinance. This is more persuasive to Muslim communities than citing RAs or EOs. The Islamic authorities issuing the Fatwah also will feel involved. They will acquire a strong sense of ownership because it comes from them and reflects their faith and ethical values.

Non-Muslims in the community might find it difficult to understand an ordinance founded on a Fatwah, especially if introduced by a body not normally recognized by civil authorities. The key is to enhance consensus-building so that the ordinance is reached through a process of participation, consultation and a real effort to involve all affected members of the community.

- e) Conduct regular information-education-communication (IEC) activities on good fishery practices in the home, *madrasah*, schools, mosques, and community.

Use should be made of information channels in the community (for example, the mosque<sup>7</sup>) to help spread coastal management information, lessons, and the like. There should be activities and materials for home-based information dissemination (door-to-door visits, for example). One can also use natural gathering areas, such as the health or barangay center.

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<sup>7</sup> Khutbah or sermons on coastal resource management can be compiled into a new sourcebook.

Community events and festivals can also be used as entry points to help spread coastal management information. Another way is to wrap environmental messages around celebrities, such as Robin Padilla.

Still another way is to use indigenous storytelling practices. These include the traditional songs, dances, *kulintang* music, and colorful native designs of the Maguindanaon, Maranao, Tausug, Yakan, and Sama peoples. The *bayok* and *darangen* (Maranao epic) could be used as motifs for teaching environmental governance principles. Perhaps, individual Muslim artists in the community as well as Muslim artistic groups could be tapped to help, such as the Sining Kambayoka Ensemble, the award-winning theater company of Mindanao State University in Marawi City.

- f) Provide incentives for good practices in coastal ecosystem management and serve as role models.
- g) Encourage people to be environment champions in accordance with the values of Islam and become true disciples of the faith.

A suggestion is to mobilize mothers in Muslim communities. It is generally acknowledged that Muslim mothers are the ideal promoters of change in households. One could also tap into women's organizations (such as the Marawi City-based Philippine Muslim Women's Council) to help promote mothers as role models in protecting the environment.

### Unlawful (*Haram*) Practices<sup>8</sup>

- a) Use of active fishing gears, operation of commercial fishing boats (more than 3-gross tonnage) and use of super-light in city and municipal waters.
- b) Any source of livelihood that comes from the practices above is unlawful and certainly haram.
- c) Use of fine mesh nets in fishing.
- d) Use of destructive fishing methods (e.g., explosives, poisons, electricity, muro-ami).
- e) Taking or catching, selling, possessing, transporting and exporting whale sharks, manta rays and other rare, threatened, or endangered species.

Muslims might find it difficult to accept this because of traditional attitudes to these species. There is a need to disseminate an understanding of the concept of endangered species and why catching of these species is unlawful.

- f) Gathering, possessing, selling or exporting raw or processed coral of any kind.
- g) Destruction of mangroves and unauthorized conversion to fishponds or for any other purpose.

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<sup>8</sup> Islam considers these haram because they are destructive. Corresponding prohibitions are found in the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550) and its implementing rules and regulations.

- h) Fishing in fishery reserves, refuge, sanctuaries or marine protected areas, declared overfished areas and during closed seasons.
- i) Capture and exportation of *sabalo* and other breeders or spawners.
- j) Importation and export of fish and fishery products without permits.
- k) Dumping of waste and other pollutants in the coastal waters.
- l) Construction of structures that obstruct coastal navigation or flow of tide.





*Muslims should  
aim at what is  
beautiful, clean  
and peaceful*



# CHAPTER 7

## PROPERLY MANAGING OUR WASTES

HOW to properly manage both solid waste and waste water is a major challenge confronting all local governments in the Philippines. Groundwater contamination is estimated to be 58% of total. Uncollected, unsegregated, and unmanaged solid wastes (less than 40% of solid waste is collected) continue to poison aquatic life and clog rivers and waterways.

Mindanao Waste Generation Estimates, 2000 and 2010, in Millions of Tons per Year					
	2000		2010		
	Mill. T/yr	% of total	Mill. T/yr	% of total	
Zamboanga peninsula	0.40	3.8	0.53	3.8	
Northern Mindanao	0.37	3.4	0.47	3.4	
Davao region	0.70	6.6	0.97	6.9	
Soccsksargen	0.33	3.1	0.41	2.9	
Caraga	0.26	2.4	0.31	2.2	
ARMM	0.26	2.5	0.39	2.7	

*Source: Urban Environment and Solid Waste Management Study, GHK/MMR International Ltd. 1994; CALA Urban Development and Environment Study, 1996; JICA/MMDA, 1999.*

A fundamental principle that puts Islam in the center of environmental issues, particularly on solid waste management, is the admonition on cleanliness and achieving purity. A vital part of the well-being of any community is the concern for the environment in which the community lives.

This is *ibadah*, and generates behavior consistent with the *Shari'ah*. Muslims should aim at what is beautiful, clean and peaceful.

Islam places great emphasis on cleanliness (*Taharah*), in both its physical and spiritual aspects. On the physical side, Islam requires the Muslim to clean his body, his clothes, his house, and the whole community, and he is rewarded by God for doing so. While people generally consider cleanliness a desirable attribute, Islam *insists* on it, making it an indispensable fundamental of the faith.

A Muslim is required to be pure morally and spiritually as well as physically. Through the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, Islam requires the sincere believer to sanitize and purify his entire way of life.

Islam stresses the importance of cleanliness as shown in several considerations in the *Sunnah* as well as the Qur'an. Cleanliness is one of the qualities which Allah, the Exalted, loves.

He says:

إن الله يحب التوابين و يحب المتطهرين. (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٢)

Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.

- Holy Qur'an 2:222

Purification or cleanliness is an inseparable part of faith. The actual, authentic *hadith* in this respect says:

Purification is half of faith.

- Muslim, Ahmad  
and Al-Tirmidhi

Purification includes both *moral purification* — where one is free from polytheism, hypocrisy and ill manners — and

*physical purification*, which means private and public cleanliness.

Cleanliness is also the pathway to health and strength. Islam inspires the health and strength of Muslims, preparing them to confront and overcome different circumstances. The strong believer is better and Allah loves him more than the weak believer. The Muslim is entrusted with his body. Thus, he must not neglect it lest it becomes plagued with disease.

Islam promotes beauty. God is beautiful and loves beauty. Peace is compatible with beauty.

A high standard of cleanliness needs to be maintained by all individuals, at home, in the streets, schools, offices, markets, public places of neighborhood and communities. This is a responsibility shared by everyone who lives in the locality. If an individual cannot maintain clean personal habits, there is no way he can be expected to act about proper garbage management, clean streets and beautiful surrounding.

Local government units, alone, cannot tackle the job effectively. Individuals in the community need to become aware that health and hygiene can be effectively addressed by consistent efforts to clean the surrounding through proper waste disposal and other waste management practices. This will ensure successful adherence to Islamic rules on cleanliness.

One possibility is to incorporate solid waste management into the school curriculum. The *madrasah* could be a valuable partner in this.

How does uncollected garbage impact on health? Garbage left lying around for two to three days become a

breeding ground for microorganisms, flies, and rats. These can spread diseases such as Hepatitis A, gastroenteritis, e-coli, cholera, dysentery, and typhoid.

Public health authorities refer to these diseases as the “garbage indicator diseases”. In addition, methane produced by rotting garbage could release irritating substances in the air and worsen bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory diseases.

Here are some guidelines from the Department of Health on how households can reduce their vulnerability to garbage-related diseases:



Photo by: USAID/Victor Kintanar

- Maintain personal hygiene. Wash hands before meals. Dispose of garbage properly. Make sure trash cans are covered.
- Food should be covered to protect them from flies and other insects. Utensils and drinking water containers should be kept away from insects and rodents.
- Household segregation and recycling of wastes is encouraged. Biodegradable materials should be composted, buried, or fed to animals.
- Non-biodegradable materials like plastics and bottles should be segregated and sold to junk shops or reused. If these are not disposed of immediately, these objects need to be rinsed with water, dried, and placed in tightly covered containers for garbage collectors to pick up.
- Bringing of plastic bags or "bayong" when marketing is also encouraged to minimize the accumulation of plastic bags.
- Communities are also encouraged to organize groups that will be responsible for collecting and segregating garbage and coordinating the sale of recyclable wastes with junk shop owners.
- Other activities that may be undertaken are fumigation or fogging to control insects and the spraying of chlorinated water or disinfectants on piles of uncollected garbage.

For Islam, one of the main proofs on the importance of purity or cleanliness is the fact that no Muslim can perform his prayers (*Salat*) without first doing ablution (*Wudu'*). No prayer will be valid without ablution. The Qur'an insists that the believer maintain a constant state of purity.

In the Qur'an, Allah the Almighty said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ. وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَرُوا. (سورة المائدة: ٦)

O you who believe! When you intent to offer As-Salat (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of *Janaba* (i.e., after a sexual discharge), purify yourselves (bathe your whole body).

- Holy Qur'an 5:6

The Muslim obligation to be pure and clean does not stop with *Wudu'*. The obligation to be pure and clean extends beyond the prayers (*Salat*) to include the home, streets and the immediate surroundings in the community.

There are seven essentials or obligatory conditions (*Fard*) for prayers (*Salat*) to be valid. One of these is the "cleanliness of the place [where Prayer is being offered]". Muslims should be mindful that this refers not only to the exact location where the prayer carpet is being laid but also to the entire place where prayers are done, as in mosques and homes. Hence, mosques and homes should be kept clean inside and out.

Essentially, the purposes of the Muslim community are two: (a) To establish a system of Islam for the service of God; and (b) to protect the interest of the people. On the other hand, damage of all forms and kinds is forbidden in Islam. One of

the fundamental principles of Islamic Law is the prophetic declaration, “There shall be no damage and infliction of damage.” This is clearly set in the *hadith*, as related to by the Imam Malik in the *Muwatta’*, and by al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak*.

Islamic law maintains that “damage shall be eliminated,” and “damage shall be removed to the extent that is possible.” However the protective measures that are taken should not lead to other adverse impacts in accordance with the principle that “damage shall not be eliminated by means of similar damage.” Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said,

Removing any harm from the road is charity  
[that will be rewarded by Allah].  
- Reported by Bukhari

There is a similar *Hadith* that says “removing any harm from the road is the smallest sign of belief” (*Imaan*). These utterances of the Holy Prophet do not simply mean immediate harm as in wounds that may be caused by thorns or other sharp, pointed objects. “Harm” includes diseases that can be carried by insects such as mosquitoes or flies from dirty ponds or caused by inhalation of harmful odors from unmanaged garbage in the homes and streets.

While waste management has become a national law only recently, God has made waste management an obligation for Muslims more than 1,400 years ago for the good of physical and spiritual lives of Muslims. This handbook hopes to make waste management easier for all Muslims by providing samples of recommended (*Halal*) and forbidden (*Haram*) practices in waste management.

To summarize, the balance of use and after-use of any resources by man must conform to the balance in nature and

the purpose for which these resources are made available to man. Truly, in this sense, worship becomes man's daily activity and a conscious effort to be God's steward of His Creation.

### **Recommended Practices**

- a) Segregating wastes into biodegradable, recyclable, residuals and special wastes.
  - *Biodegradable* wastes are those that decompose.
  - *Recyclables* are those that can be sold to junkshops.
  - *Residuals* are those that have no use anymore.
  - *Special wastes* are dangerous wastes like leftover paint, fuel and chemical containers, spent fluorescent bulbs, expired medicines, chemicals, old batteries, insecticides sprays and similar wastes
  
- b) Composting of biodegradable wastes.
  - About two-thirds of our daily garbage is biodegradable. These can be turned into compost or organic fertilizers for use in home gardens.
  - Composting can be income-generating when good quality compost is produced in larger volumes.
  - Compost can be sold to garden and flower shops and farmers for use in their farms.
  - Unlike chemical fertilizers, compost or organic fertilizers do not harm the soil's fertility.
  - Compost or organic fertilizers can even produce better harvests for fruit, vegetable and rice farmers.
  
- c) Re-use and recycling of wastes.
  - One out of every five things we throw away is recyclable and re-usable.
  - For example, plastic bags can be used many times and we should avoid the throwing them away after only one use.

- This saves money.
  - Other garbage like glass bottles, plastic containers, and paper can be sold to junk buyers.
  - Some family members can also make ornaments and decors out of recyclable materials. For example, juice packs can be sewn together and made into stylish bags.
  - Aside from eliminating these wastes properly, family members earn from selling these materials.
- d) Properly managing waste disposal facilities.
- Barangay local government units are obliged to put up materials recovery facilities (MRFs) for biodegradable and recyclable wastes in their barangay or in cluster with other barangays.
  - City and municipal LGUs should be responsible for the proper and segregated collection and proper disposal of residual and special wastes from barangays within their respective jurisdictions.
  - Open dumps and controlled dumps existing in the LGUs should be closed and rehabilitated.
  - The law encourages LGUs to have their own sanitary landfills (SLFs) or in cluster with other LGUs.

### **Unlawful (*Haram*) Practices**

- a) Burning garbage.
- The smoke produced by burning garbage can cause respiratory ailments, especially among children.
  - Dangerous chemical compounds are also released into the atmosphere contributing to global warming and damage to the ozone layer.

- b) Throwing garbage into sidewalks, rivers, seas, and vacant lots.
  - Garbage clogs up waterways.
  - This causes rivers and seas to become stagnant and unsanitary.
  - This is another potential cause of diseases.
- c) Squatting in open dumps or landfills.
- d) Burying garbage in flood-prone areas.
- e) Mixing garbage that has already been segregated.
- f) Selling junk or recyclable items that do not belong to the seller.
  - Islam prohibits the “fencing” or buying of stolen property.
  - The Prophet also forbade any kind of transaction that led to some litigation due to some uncertainty of origin, or which involved an unspecific amount to be delivered or exchanged.



## ANNEX

### "We Are the Khalifa/Vicegerent on Earth" (Khutbah on the Environment)

By Amrola Diambangan  
Aleem<sup>9</sup> of the Young Moro Professional Network

All praises and thanks be to "ALLAH" the Lord of the Universe and all that exists. He has the Power on all things, and none has the right to be worshiped except Him alone. Peace and blessings of "ALLAH" be upon the Prophet Muhammad his families, companions and those who follow his teachings.

My brothers and sisters in Faith! Let us always remind ourselves that we are only in this very temporal world, full of temptations and trials. Our wealth, family, position may be an instrument for us to forget and be busy in this very materialistic, luxurious and a very amusing life. "Allah" said in the Holy Qur'an to the effect: "Verily your wealth and your children are but a trials and temptations."

God Almighty created us for a certain purpose and we have a task that must be fulfilled. But in every sphere of our life there is trial. We are ordained to worship Him, alone and follow his commands and laws and do righteous deeds in order to attain the ultimate success in this world and the life hereafter.

*Ya UmmataL Islam!* O, you the nation of Islam! Allah created mankind and raised it up among other creations. He created the Angels from the light and they have no will except to worship Him alone and to follow all His commands. And

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<sup>9</sup> "Aleem" means "learned man". It is the singular form of "Ulama".

He, Almighty, created Animals and they have not given the wisdom of reasoning and knowledge, but they are only to eat and follow their desires and lusts.

But God Almighty created us mankind and blessed us with things that He did not give to the Angels and Animals and other creations. This is the very essence of life and we are given the choice to follow or not, to believe or to disbelieve. We have the choice and knowledge that must be used to discern right from wrong. "ALLAH" said in the holy Qur'an: You are the best nation ever raised up, because you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong".

We know that our religion Islam is the perfect and best religion chosen for us by God. He said in the Holy Qur'an: "Today I have perfected and completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

We are now living in this very chaotic society. We are ordained to protect and preserve our environment, to clean our surroundings as we clean our hearts from impurity, envy, hypocrisy and all sickness of the heart.

Why we are in this kind of society? We are Muslims and Islam is our religion. Why do we not see the sweetness and perfectness of our religion? Allah said in the Qur'an: "If the nation/community will truly believe and fear Allah (follow all his commands, do righteous deeds and forbid what is wrong and shirk), then we will open unto them the gates of mercy from the heavens and the earth."

I ask you my brothers and sisters in Islam. Let us be good Muslims. Be Models to everyone. We have the covenant and trust that everyone of us is mandated to follow and will be asked on the day of judgment. Remember that one day we will meet our Lord and we will be reckoned for our deeds.

Here we are, the coming election is near. I am afraid that this is again another big trial for us. How many clans and families will be affected and become enemies again? The family feuds will be awakened and blood will flow again in the midst of our land. How many lives will be lost again and we will not meet them anymore, only because of love of this very small and temporary position?

Let us strengthen our faith and ask Allah's guidance. Let us not sell our rights. Vote wisely for those whom we know are the right person for the position. We are entrusted with this. Be honest and give everyone his due; respect one another and love our neighbor for God's sake. Help clean our house and surroundings. Our environment, preserve it for the coming generation. This is for our children.

Be a Muslim in our house, mosque, schools, office, market, public place and anywhere. Be a Muslim wherever we go and be God-fearing and let us unite and love, respecting one another for God's sake.

- Delivered April 13, 2007  
at Masjed Bubong Lilod Madaya

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