Global Issues in Water Policy

Volume 8

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Water Policy in the Philippines

Issues, Initiatives, and Prospects

Springer

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ISSN 2211-0631 ISSN 2211-0658 (electronic)
Global Issues in Water Policy
ISBN 978-3-319-70968-0 ISBN 978-3-319-70969-7 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70969-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017962567

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

Water advocates had warned of an impending water crisis in the Philippines. The projections for 2025 show that in a high-economic-growth scenario, the water balance is predicted to be negative for some regions in the Philippines. The reason behind the crisis could either be because of increased water demand arising from economic growth and population rise or because of decreased water supply associated with watershed degradation and climate change.

Notwithstanding, the Philippine freshwater ecosystems also face severe problems because of pollution. Economic activities have considerably increased the effluents being discharged to water bodies. Domestic sewage has contributed about 52% of the pollution load, while industries account for the remaining 48%, according to recent data. Other causes of water pollution include improper and inefficient operation of landfills and lack of public cooperation on the proper disposal of sewage and solid wastes.

This book is a timely reference for water policy decision-makers. The analysis and recommendations contained in this publication to ensure water security can turn the tide for both declining and degraded water resources.

As the last chapter prescribes, "there is a need to implement policies and corresponding policy instruments in an integrated manner instead of the usual piecemeal approach." As deemed by the authors, the policy implementation requires putting investments into human and institutional capacities as well as on modern technologies. These investments, from the government point of view, are necessary for the water sector's improved planning, proper and efficient implementation of water programs, and sustained management and development of water resources in the country.

Roy A. Cimatu
DENR Secretary

Preface

Rapid population growth and urbanization were observed to cause increasing competition in the use of water, the supply of which is also becoming scarce due to widespread water pollution and degradation of watersheds. According to a 2007 Asian Development Bank report, some Asian countries will face a water crisis in the future due to inadequate or inappropriate water governance mechanisms. Cases all over the world, the Philippines included, have shown that water governance is a very complex process. Decisions about policies, laws, institutional structure, incentives, and capacity development are made by a multilayer of decision-makers: national, regional, local, and even ethnic authorities. Water conflicts have also been observed especially at the local level.

To address this issue, a group of University of the Philippines faculty members conducted a research program that aimed to understand the current status of water governance. Funded by the University of the Philippines during the years 2012 to 2016, the study characterized water governance in urban, urbanizing, and rural areas of the country; conducted an actor-based assessment of water governance at the watershed level; and developed a platform for adaptive collaborative water governance in three sites differentiated by level of urbanization and ease of access to water.

The writing of this book was motivated by the aspiration to share the results of this 4-year study. The original proposal for the book chapters focused on the water policy supporting the water dynamics within the watershed and national levels. While water governance at the watershed level has been observed to be improved by the program, national-level water governance reforms will not be that easy.

This book aims to contribute to the national water governance reforms through incisive analysis of present water policies. Using perspectives from the biophysical and social sciences, this volume maps and examines the current state of the water sector in the Philippines in terms of demand, supply, and uses; legal, institutional, and policy arrangements; sector performance (domestic, industrial, agriculture and

fisheries, environment, and multiple-use sectors); initiatives for water supply sustainability and improved water demand management; and prospects to achieve water security. With increasing population, urbanization, land use conversion, and the threats associated with climate change, water policy and its implementation must improve.

Los Baños, Philippines Agnes C. Rola

Acknowledgment

This book reflects the authors' passion to contribute to the improvement of the Philippine water policy environment. All of the authors have in one way or another been engaged with the water sector as researcher, consultant, and administrator. Each has his/her own thinking, stock knowledge, and practical experience about what ails the sector, and thus, the actual writing of the manuscript was not a difficult exercise. We therefore thank the various authors who gave their time and expertise freely to come up with this volume.

The University of the Philippines (UP) through the Emerging Interdisciplinary Research Program (EIDR) funded most of the research work in this volume. We acknowledge with gratitude the unconditional support of then UP President Alfredo E. Pascual and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gisela P. Concepcion, in making this volume a reality.

This volume also benefitted from the contribution of UP colleagues, Dr. Guillermo Q. Tabios lll and Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, who wrote two chapters each, and our non-UP colleagues, Dr. Arlene B. Inocencio, Dr. Rafael D. Guerrero lll, and Mr. Antonio "Tony" R. de Vera, whose chapter contributions made the story more complete.

To Professor Ariel Dinar of the School of Public Policy, University of California, Riverside, and the editorial board of the Issues in Water Resources Policy series of Springer, our heartfelt thanks for the encouragement and for the confidence that we can come through with this publication.

Finally, we thank the Springer Nature publication and its staff, particularly Mr. Joseph Daniel, for guiding the editors in the publication process.

The Editors

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