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## Environmental Legislation and Action in Polity, Economy and Culture for Climate Change Adaptation: A Case Study of Misamis Oriental Province, the Philippines

*Isaias S. Sealza and Huong Ha*

### 1. Introduction

Climate change (CC) caused concern when the rains no longer came with clockwork regularity, when the heat became oppressive and the effects of *El Niño* and *La Niña* became vicious. In accordance with international treaties, notably the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, the Philippine national government enacted landmark legislation, such as the Philippine Clean Air Act in 1999, the Solid Waste Management Act in 2000, the Biofuels Act in 2007 and the Renewable Energy Law in 2008. It formulated the Philippine Climate Change Response Framework (CCRF), which highlighted the need for the effective governance of CC response, proaction of stakeholders, lifestyle change and action within international communities (Presidential Task Force on Climate Change, 2007). It created a Climate Change Commission to coordinate, monitor and evaluate CC-related programmes and action plans of the government (Loft and Kenny, 2012). Subsequently, it launched the CC academy for education in disaster-risk reduction and management.

The twin responses to CC are mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation requires cutting the root causes of CC. Obviously it entails a global movement with the introduction of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. Adaptation, on the other hand, is a local response to sustain life in spite of CC. Active adaptation also implies mitigation, as when a farmer adapts to CC by replacing annual staple crops with perennial fruit trees – they have to contribute to reducing the causes of CC.

While the national government can enter into international agreements on matters of mitigation, each locality has to create and develop its own,

especially since many functions performed formerly by the national government, including those relating to agriculture, environment and human welfare, have been devolved to the local government units (LGUs) by virtue of the Republic Act 7160 of 1991. Devolution enables local autonomy, allowing LGUs to decide which policies to adopt and which action programmes to finance.

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the position of Misamis Oriental (MisOr) LGU in terms of policies and actions apropos the national CCRF in the context of local autonomy, using Talcott Parsons' (1960) social systems theory. This theory hypothesises that MisOr LGU is in one accord with the national government. It argues that key actors – namely, government in polity, business in the economy and civil society organisations in society – have to achieve calibrated interdependence in order to effect substantial ground-level CC adaptation among the populace.

MisOr province has been selected for this research study for the following reasons. First, it was one of the two provinces selected by the Human Development Network (HDN) as a pilot site to examine the LGU utilisation of statistical data in planning and policy-making. Second, the fundamental criterion for selecting a province was the existence of a stable research institute in the locality to be a partner of the HDN for the study. Since the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture, established in 1957, is in MisOr, the province was chosen by the HDN.

This chapter consists of five main sections, excluding the introduction and conclusion – namely, (i) a literature review and theoretical framework, (ii) the research methods, (iii) the findings, (iv) a discussion and analysis and (v) limitations. The CCRF of the Philippines is discussed first. A theoretical framework for analysis is also introduced. This chapter also examines various environmental issues and challenges faced by the MisOr province. From the findings and discussion, both negative and positive lessons are derived which could be useful for the implementation of the CCRF.

## **2. Literature review and theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Climate-change response framework**

The Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (2007) named four imperatives for CC mitigation and adaptation – namely, (i) the country's participation in international action, (ii) the effective governance of the CC response, (iii) proaction and cooperation among diverse stakeholders and (iv) lifestyle changes. These imperatives called for a climate-friendly energy supply mix, policy incentives for renewable energy, diverse interventions in energy generation, and adaptation to address issues with particular sectors and specific geographic areas. Other initiatives include focusing on high-risk settlements, as well as the vulnerable population centres and food-producing areas, financing interventions in support of local and sectoral initiatives for