

MALACANANG
Manila

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 502

BANNING THE HARVESTING, GATHERING, BUYING, SELLING, AND MUTILATING OF MATURED AND YOUNG LEAFSHEATHS OF ABACA PLANTS (*Musa textilis* Nee) FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the abaca plant, which is indigenous to the Philippines, is producing the natural fiber known worldwide as Manila Hemp;

WHEREAS, it is considered one of the high value commercial crops contributing an average of P4.5B revenue for the country and providing direct and indirect employment to an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos;

WHEREAS, it is considered an industrial crop that provide fibers for use in industrial production of pulp and paper, fibercraft, and cordage applications both for local and foreign markets;

WHEREAS, there is an unabated harvesting, gathering, buying, selling, and mutilating of its matured and young leafsheaths known locally as "bakkak" or "umbak", thus slowly decimating its existence and threatening the source of fibers;

WHEREAS, these activities will and in numerous cases have aggravated further the spread of abaca viral diseases particularly the abaca bunchy-top, abaca mosaic and the abaca bract, and other microorganisms mostly by mechanical means and the transporting of these abaca "umbak" or "bakkak";

NOW, THEREFORE, I GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order;

Section 1. Coverage. The Executive Order shall cover all areas planted and those to be planted to abaca.

Section 2. Ban. The harvesting, gathering, buying, selling, and mutilating for commercial purposes of its matured abaca plants and its young leafsheaths known locally as "bakkak" or "umbak" or any terms that may be commonly used is hereby total banned.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. The following terms shall be used for this purpose:



"Abaca Plant" refers to the plant scientifically known as *Musa textiles* Nees and belongs to the family Musaceae. It is similar to banana in appearance except that the leaves are upright, pointed, narrower and more tapering than the leaves of bananas.

"Umbak or Bakbak" or similar terms being used in different locations shall refer to the abaca leafsheaths or overlapping leafsheaths which are tightly laid one upon the other to form a solid mass commonly called as the stalk or stem of the abaca.

Section 4. Implementing Agencies. The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall supervise, and monitor the implementation of this Order. The Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA), an attached agency of the DA, shall be the lead agency and shall coordinate with all the Barangay, Municipal, and Provincial Government Units, the Regional Field Units of the DA including the Philippine National Police, Philippine Ports Authority, Bureau of Customs, Legislative Officials and other government instrumentalities in the implementation of this Order.

Section 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The Department of Agriculture shall issue the implementing guidelines for the effective implementation of this EO, including the inclusion of a line item in the annual budget of the Fiber Industry Development Authority for the purpose.

Section 6. Repealing Clause. All executive orders, rules regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with provisions of this Executive Order, are hereby revoked or modified accordingly.

Section 7. Effectivity. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

DONE, in the City of Manila this 2nd day of February, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Six.

Alvin Lungsod



By the President:

Eduardo R. Ermita

EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary

