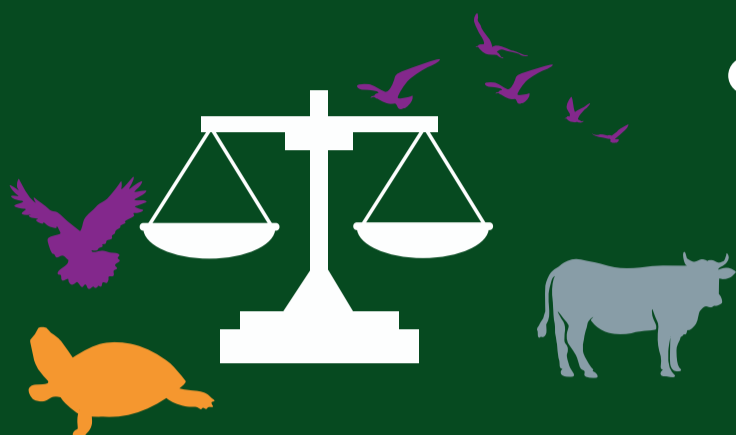




# RIGHTS OF Nature PH FAQs



## 2 WHY DO WE NEED TO ADOPT NEW LEGAL STRUCTURES RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF NATURE?

2

In the Philippines, we have no law recognizing the rights of nature or ecosystems. It is important that a law is passed. All laws currently, effectively allow massive use of natural resources beyond its carrying capacity, and support the current development orientation that seeks to extract, produce more commodities to earn more profit, but using the language of regulation and management. Likewise, the current environmental laws protect human rights - the rights of people to a healthy and balanced ecology or the right to just access to natural resources, which also help to protect the environment. However, recognizing the rights of nature would give better protection to nature.



## 4 WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC RIGHTS THESE LAWS DO RECOGNIZE?

4

Rights of Nature laws grant legal rights to natural ecosystems, specifically the right to exist; to the maintenance of the vital cycles, functions and processes that ensure their continued sustainability and well-being; to the conditions necessary for their ecological renewal and restoration; and to adequate and effective representation vis-à-vis the protection and enforcement of these rights.



## 6 WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS PASSED PRIOR, WHICH ARE NOT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF RIGHTS OF NATURE, IF THIS BILL IS PASSED?

6

The existing laws will still be enforceable because it protects the rights of people and the future generations to a balanced and healthy environment. RON Bill complements existing environmental laws as it fills in the gaps in our current laws by protecting our natural ecosystems as a whole and preventing irreversible environmental degradation.

1

## 1 WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY THAT NATURE SHOULD HAVE RIGHTS?

Nature should have rights because all that exists have rights. Rights should not be solely for humans. All existence has a role and function that sustains the circle of life. These roles and functions are the very basis of their intrinsic value and inherent rights. All existence interacts with both living and non-living beings and should be able to fulfill their roles and functions.

Legally, it means giving nature or ecosystems a legal entity, or the capacity to protect and defend themselves from human actions that can violate their vital processes which enable them to fulfill their roles and functions. It will give them the opportunity to file a suit against any groups that violate their rights, through a representative.



3

## 3 IN WHAT COUNTRIES HAVE LAWS RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF NATURE BEEN ADOPTED?

Ecuador has recognized the rights of nature via constitutional amendment. Bolivia, New Zealand, Panama, and Australia have recognized the rights of nature either in general or for a specific ecosystem or environmental feature in their local laws, while the top courts of Colombia, Bangladesh, India, and Uganda have recognized the rights of nature through judicial decisions and ordered the government to recognize such. Several local municipalities in the United States have also passed rights of nature laws.



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## 5 WHAT WILL RON PROVIDE GIVEN THE MANY ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS EXISTING IN THE PHILIPPINES?

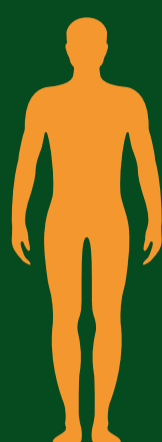
Recognizing that ecosystems have rights will provide an additional layer of protection to the existing laws, rules and regulations that will strengthen environmental protection. The current environmental laws protect the rights of people to a healthy and balanced ecology and ensure just access to these resources. The rights of nature will protect nature itself.

RoN Laws will democratize environmental protection because it will enable citizens and communities to assert the rights of affected ecosystems by representing nature in court. The plaintiffs do not have to establish direct or personal damage to themselves, only that the questioned activities bring damage to the represented ecosystem that will hinder its processes vital to sustain its life, simplifying procedures in protecting the environment.

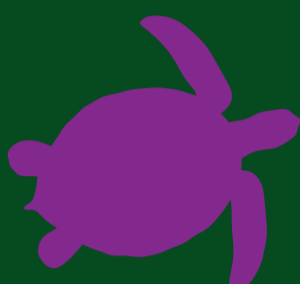




# RIGHTS OF Nature PH FAQs



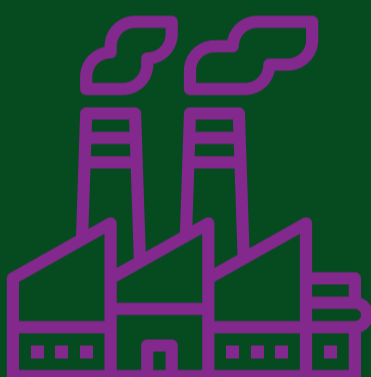
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## 8 DOESN'T THIS MEAN THAT ROCKS MUST BE GIVEN TO LAWYERS?

8

The pending RON bills in Congress protect natural ecosystems, not individual elements in the environment. However, the relationship of living beings with the organic or non-living organisms in an area constitutes an ecosystem. Thus, massive extraction of stones in forest areas or sand in rivers can be subject to a case when vital processes of the whole ecosystem are affected.



## 10 IF A RIGHTS OF NATURE LAW IS PASSED, WOULD THIS MEAN WE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO CUT THE TREES IN OUR FORESTS OR CONDUCT FISHING ACTIVITIES FOR CONSUMPTION AND FOR OUR LIVELIHOOD?

10

Fishing, cutting trees, and using natural resources for human consumption and livelihood and done on a limited scale, and within the processes that sustain the web of cycle and in harmony with nature are allowed. What the RON bills prohibit are activities which damage the ability of the ecosystems to exist, flourish and regenerate as a whole.



## 12 WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT RIGHTS OF NATURE?

12

You can join this movement by signing our online signature campaign through this link [[www.tinyurl.com/y7uyzdwm](http://www.tinyurl.com/y7uyzdwm)], or you can visit our website and social media sites:

[www.pmpi.org.ph](http://www.pmpi.org.ph)

Facebook.com/philmisereor  
Facebook.com/rightsofnatureph/  
Or email us at: [secretariat@pmpi.org.ph](mailto:secretariat@pmpi.org.ph)

(NASSA) +63 (02) 527-4147

7

## 7 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN NATURE'S RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE A CONFLICT?

The court would weigh the harm and the interests then decide how to balance them. Humans are an integral part of nature as well, which means that human needs must also be considered when the rights and interests of ecosystems come into conflict with those of humans.



9

## 9 DOES THIS MEAN THAT COMPANIES CANNOT USE NATURAL RESOURCES ANYMORE FOR PRODUCING AND DEVELOPING PRODUCTS FOR THE CONSUMPTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

Companies will not be prohibited from using natural resources for producing and developing products. Rights of Nature enhances our current system of environmental protection by ensuring that the impact of economic projects to the environment are duly considered in a holistic perspective - assessing possible damages, mitigation actions needed and the costs of ecosystem restoration.



11

## 11 WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH?

The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth was drafted and approved during the Peoples Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Bolivia in April 2010. It was presented at the UN General Assembly's Interactive Dialogue on sustainable development in harmony with nature in April 2011.

BE A PART OF THIS MOVEMENT

