

TURF in Malalison

BY MB Surtida

Granting of territorial use rights in fisheries (TURF) has been recommended as a management tool for municipal fisheries. It includes the right to limit or control access to a territory, the right to determine the amount and kind of use within the territory, and the right to extract benefits from the use of the resources within the territory.

Alongside two other components, the TURF concept was discussed in Malalison Island as early as 1990 during the site selection phase of the CFRM project. The concept was translated into policy through Municipal Ordinance No. 5-90 designating one square kilometer between Malalison and Culasi as TURF area and shall be for the exclusive use of the Fisherman's Association of Malalison Island (FAMI) in implementing seafarming activities. In 1991, Municipal Ordinance No. 2-91 was adopted as an addendum, prohibiting incursion of illegal transient fishers and entry of big fishers.

When the project was formally launched in 1991, the concept and principles were again discussed during the first general assembly of the community members. "The TURF concept has since been a regular topic of conversation in formal and informal discussions among the members of FAMI, AQD, and PROCESS Foundation (the community organizing arm of the project)," reported Agbayani & Babol.

In a 1992 study, the acceptability of TURFS under Philippine conditions was conducted among coastal dwellers in five municipalities in Panay Island. Culasi, Malalison's mainland, was included in the study. The results of the survey showed a readiness of the fisherfolk for the practice



A reminder of the rules and regulations (including penalties) governing the fish sanctuary is put up.

of TURF. The study also found that with assistance from government and non-government organizations, fisherfolk can be organized to solve the problem of inadequate catch.

But Jelson Dayo, an active member of FAMI said in an interview in December 1998 that the TURF established in 1990 (1x1 km² as provided for by MO #5-90) was not enforced until the present time. Saying that *apiktado ang pangabuhian sang tawo* (the livelihood of people are affected), the municipal ordinance could not be enforced even if they already knew the benefits to be derived from the ordinances. Thus, as the project progressed, revisions on the concept of TURF were formulated.

In a FAMI manifesto, TURF was de-

finied as the proper utilization, management, and control by FAMI of the body of water surrounding Malalison Island. There were two components of TURF: (1) fish sanctuary and (2) deployment of concrete artificial reefs.

Fish sanctuary was defined as the habitat of fish and other aquatic species and that fishing of any type was prohibited. Artificial reefs (ARs) are the man-made structures to serve as fish habitats. Fishing in areas where ARs were deployed would be regulated in terms of types of gears and fishing season. Commercial fishers would be banned in the TURF area while illegal fishing practices such as dynamite, cyanide, fine-mesh net and other destructive gears would not be allowed in the AR area.

In the enforcement of the TURF, FAMI agreed on the following guidelines:

- (1) fine of P1,000, confiscation of fish catch, and filing of case against those caught fishing inside the fish sanctuary;
- (2) charging of fishing fee for those fishing in areas where ARs are deployed at the rate of 5% of the value of their catch for non-Malalison fishers and 1% for Malalison fishers;
- (3) there will no fishing during spawning season of selected fishes.

The Malalison fish sanctuary ordinance was technically approved one month after 13 July 1995 when the Malalison Barangay Council submitted the ordinance to the Culasi Municipal Council. The delay was due to the lack of experience of the mu-

13

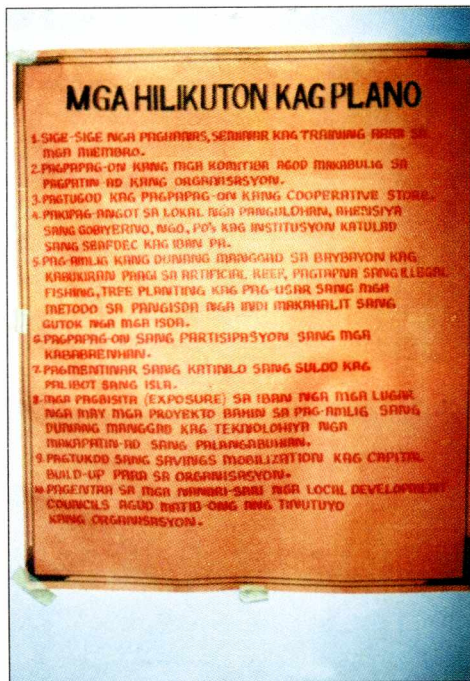
municipal council regarding the parliamentary procedures on ordinances emanating from the barangays using the Local Government Code as a legal framework.

Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, the Municipality of Culasi granted a TURF covering a 1 km² located between Culasi mainland and Malalison Island to FAMI as early as 1990 at the start of the CFRM. But there were no rules and rights defined in the use and management of the TURF area.

This manifesto was further confirmed by a community-initiated survey conducted in October-December 1995 to determine the following:

- whether fishers agree to the concept of TURF;
- determine the types of fishing gears to be allowed in the area;
- amount of fee (percentage of value of catch) that the fishers are willing to pay FAMI to defray expenses in overseeing the fishing activities in the TURF area.

Plans and programs poster at Malalison Barangay Hall.



A total of 146 respondents from Malalison and 6 coastal barangays facing Malalison were interviewed. The survey showed that 61% were in favor, 5% against, the rest undecided about the implementation of TURF. A majority of the respondents were against net fishing in the TURF area especially destructive ones. Respondents were also against the use of compressor in spear fishing. Any kind of hook and line fishing gears were acceptable to the respondents.

Today, FAMI members are satisfied with the fish sanctuary, a modification of the original concept of TURF. Mr. Dayo mentioned that to be very successful, the fish sanctuary should have concrete artificial reefs. He said that people truly guard the 600 meter diameter area so that only fish outside of such can be caught. Violators are penalized depending on the offense. No doubt both TURFs give us valuable lessons. ###

