

‘Responsible’ logging should be allowed in select areas—NEDA

*By Cai Ordinario
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The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said it is more partial to “responsible” logging in select areas, saying a total log ban would hurt the local furniture industry.

In a recent briefing, Neda Director General Ernesto M. Pernia told reporters that logging should only stop in places that have already been denuded.

Pernia also said the President may have just been “thinking out loud” when he was quoted as saying that there should be a total log ban.

“The president did not declare [a total log ban] but he was thinking out loud ‘maybe you should impose a total log ban,’” Pernia said. “There are areas where trees should not be cut and areas where it can be allowed.”

Neda Assistant Secretary Mercedita A. Sombilla told the BusinessMirror that the oversight agency was not consulted regarding the President’s plan to impose a log ban.

Sombilla said, however, the agency expects to be included in a technical working group (TWG) that will discuss the log ban and the map that will be created.

Last Thursday Presidential Spokesman Ernesto C. Corpuz said the tripartite convergence committee was tasked to study logging permits.

The committee was also tasked to create a map of areas that should have a total log ban and where logging can continue.

Areas where logging can continue, Abella said, include industrial farms, where trees are cultured to support furniture and other wood-based industries. He also said the President has expressed concern for farmers who use wood in their households.

Based on the final results of the 2013 Annual Survey of Philippine Business and Industry-Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector, there were seven firms involved in growing timber forests.

These firms were engaged in growing timber forest species, such as gemelina and eucalyptus, planting, replanting, transplanting, thinning and conserving of forest and timber tracts.

These firms employed 676 employees, but only 672 were considered paid employees. The companies booked an income of P138.5 million and expenses amounting to P128.88 million in 2013.