

CGIP

Consultative Group on Indigenous Peoples

PRESS RELEASE

March 23, 2011

For questions, please contact:

Maricel A. Tolentino (CGIP-ANGOC) at Tel. No. (02)9945894 or mobile number 0917819108

Robie Halip (Office of Cong. Teddy Baguilat, Jr.) at Tel. No. (02) 9315106 or at mobile number 09214928244



Rep. Teddy Brawner Baguilat affirming his full support to the IP Agenda and Action Plan (Photo by Erwin Quinones)

National IP Summit culminates with commitment-setting

INDIGENOUS peoples (IP) and IP organizations from around the country are calling on the government to immediately suspend the processing of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and issuance of Certificate of Pre-conditions (CP) for major projects such as mining and infrastructure on grounds that these have violated their rights to self-determination.

CGIP

Consultative Group on Indigenous Peoples

This was one of the key recommendations issued by the IPs and IP groups and organizations in a resolution finalized at the close of the three-day summit on indigenous peoples that gathered over 140 participants from 56 tribes and organizations to craft a common legislative and executive agenda for indigenous peoples.

Aside from the call to suspend the processing of FPIC, the IP groups likewise urged the government to immediately revise the guidelines for the granting of the FPIC in consideration of their claims to their ancestral domain and their desire to live peacefully according to their own culture and traditions.

The FPIC is required by the government before mining and dam projects, for example, can push through. IP groups claim, however, that many of these multi-billion peso projects have managed to go ahead despite their stiff opposition to the encroachment to their ancestral domain.

This is also why the resolution recommended that the Mining Act of 1995 be repealed and that alternative mining bills that provide for rational management of minerals and upholds the rights of indigenous peoples be passed.

The IP groups also urged government to declare a moratorium on large-scale mining and strictly regulate small scale mining.

The resolution also recommended that a mechanism be established to ensure that the IPs themselves can take part in the selection and appointment of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which is the main government agency mandated to implement the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.

At the same time, the IP groups and organizations also asked for a review of all programs on basic social services to consider the ethnic variabilities and cultural appropriateness of the delivery programs, particularly the 4Ps program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

For his part, Roque Agton, chair of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, said he agreed that there was a need for FPIC guidelines to be amended and that the NCIP seeks greater participation from civil society organizations and IP groups to come up with effective guidelines. Agton likewise said that the NCIP was committed to transparency and that he also sees the need to improve the guidelines on the issuances of the Certificates of Ancestral Land and Domain, as well as the guidelines on the disposition of royalty payments.

Rosalina Bistoyo, undersecretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform, meanwhile, said that the DAR will concentrate on private and agricultural lands, not areas covered by the ancestral domain titles, so as not to trample on the rights of the indigenous peoples.

This was just one of the moves, she said, that the agency was committed to doing to contribute to the development of the indigenous peoples.

CGIP

Consultative Group on Indigenous Peoples

Ambassador Jorge Domecq of the Embassy of Spain in their commitment for IPs in the Philippines said that active policy issue of indigenous peoples is paramount to development and fight against poverty. Philippines is our priority country in Asia and we would continue to give priority to projects related to indigenous people.

Nick Taylor of the European Union Delegation to the Philippines stated in his speech that IPs are an integral part of the EU's human rights policy. Fundamental to this is the respect for the right to indigenous self development. EU Philippines was able to establish a strong portfolio for IPs and we expect further increase this year in the portfolio of projects through our facility called the Non-State Actor and Local Authorities in Development which works through a call for proposal in the aspect of poverty alleviation of IPs and improved capacity of IPs in local governance.

Tess Matibag of ILO stated that the UN Philippines established its Inter-Agency Technical Working Group (IATWG) on IPs to support the country team members for the promotion and protection of IP rights. She further committed that they will continue to support the empowerment of IPs in the country.

Secretary Teresita Deles of OPAPP meanwhile said that the IP concerns are in the heart of President Aquino as embodied in his agenda for one is to make sure that NCIP is functioning as it is. She further clarified that OPAPP is playing an oversight function on NCIP and that until the time that the IP community embraces NCIP she will not recommend that NCIP sit in the Cabinet directly.

With regards to the resolutions of the National IP Summit, she committed that they will sit down with NCIP to identify key government actors in each case. She and Cong. Baguilat can take turns in reporting the work progress in relation to the various resolutions.

She concluded that the institutions in place have to work accordingly and that NCIP, particularly, should be made to work for IPs.

Cong Teddy Baguilat meanwhile stated that he is giving his full support to the resolutions and policy agenda affirmed by the participants of the Summit and that the National Cultural Communities Committee of the Congress that he is spearheading already initiated some actions some of the points of the IP Policy Agenda.#