

Asia Workshop for the Promotion of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

June 7-12, 2008

Igorot Lodge AIM, Camp John Hay, Baguio City, Philippines

Workshop Statement and Resolutions

We are 80 representatives of 29 indigenous peoples' organizations including four (4) national alliances of indigenous peoples' organizations from 11 countries in Asia; regional and global indigenous peoples networks and organization including the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN), Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) and Tebtebba; and advocate group International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).

We have come together on this historic occasion to celebrate the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), to reflect on the opportunities and challenges the Declaration presents, and to strategize on how we and governments in Asia could fully and effectively implement the Declaration so that we, as the rights holders and subjects of the UNDRIP who have long fought for its adoption, can fully participate in the realization and enjoyment of our rights as contained in the UNDRIP. We express our thanks and appreciation to the 144 member-states of the United Nations who voted for the adoption of the Declaration at the 61st Session of the UN General Assembly in 13 September 2007.

We have common histories of colonization and discrimination and we have sustained our struggles for the protection, respect and fulfillment of our basic human rights and fundamental freedoms as indigenous peoples in various countries of Asia:

- We have lived in our territories since pre-colonial history, defending and sustaining our land, territories and resources, developing our own distinct cultures and religions, systems of governance and collective identities while being firmly grounded on our relationship with our lands and waters, our worldviews, values and aspirations as indigenous peoples;
- We were colonized and continue to be recolonized and discriminated against, dominated and marginalized politically, economically, culturally, socially in the process of nation state building and globalization;
- We are labeled by governments and others as tribals, hill tribes, highland people, ethnic minorities, indigenous ethnic minorities, aboriginal people, indigenous cultural communities, etc. and are subjected to policies of assimilation, integration, annihilation or even ethnocide. In the face of all these labels, we assert that we are indigenous peoples;
- In spite of these, we have not only survived but we have strengthened our movements at the local, national, regional and global levels and asserted our rights as indigenous peoples. The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is now a part of International Human Rights Law, is a result of the cumulative work we have done at various levels up the international arena.

At present, we face serious threats and challenges to our right to self-determination and our rights to our land, territories, resources, identities and cultures:

- Laws and policies on natural resource management such as those on mining, forestry and energy; development programs and projects such as mineral, gas and oil exploitation, logging, dam-building, protected areas, biofuel plantations, industrial agriculture, among others, deny us our rights and displace us from our communities, forcing us to become refugees, migrants, cheap labor, urban poor leading to worsening situations of poverty and vulnerability;
- Official development assistance (ODA) from bilateral and multilateral donors often ignore customary land and resource rights and development priorities of indigenous peoples, and supports state and private business interests;
- Our right to self-determined development is violated as evidenced by the failure to obtain our free, prior and informed consent before any development project is implemented in our territories and the imposition of the dominant development model and corporate-led globalization;
- Imposed governance systems which undermine or destroy our indigenous governance systems, customary laws and justice systems, which fail to provide redress and justice and which are inaccessible, corrupt, unaccountable and untransparent;
- Our traditional knowledge, languages, indigenous religions are eroding because of many factors including discriminatory laws, religion and education, destruction of and displacement from ancestral lands, loss and commercialization of material culture, sacred sites and rituals for tourism in the name of development, alien and inappropriate education systems, combined with the narrowing spaces for transmission of indigenous knowledge and culture to the children and youth.
- National security laws which criminalize indigenous peoples for our defense of our rights and resistance to oppression, in addition to militarization in our territories, resulting to egregious violations of our collective and individual human rights;
- Our stewardship role for the environment, which includes biodiversity, forests, water, and the atmosphere, is seriously compromised because of the adverse impacts of climate change and climate change mitigation measures such as the expansion of biofuel production, establishment of carbon sinks such as monoculture tree plantations, building of mega-hydroelectric dams and geothermal plants and emissions trading schemes, among others;
- While we recognize that there are some existing laws and policies in different countries in Asia which recognize indigenous peoples' rights, many of these are inadequately implemented and are often manipulated to serve private and state interests, rather than to protect the rights and welfare of indigenous peoples;
- Indigenous women are further marginalized and need additional support and empowerment to overcome problems of discrimination, oppression, violence, and loss of roles and spaces for effective decision-making and participation;
- Indigenous youth are being alienated from their traditional cultures and identity and need to be supported and to be given space to participate as present and future indigenous leaders.

Having come together to analyze, strategize and formulate our action plans to address these issues, we have now achieved broader and stronger unity among ourselves, as indigenous peoples of Asia. Some UN agencies and bodies, advocates and intergovernmental bodies such as the European Union, joined us in this process and we resolve to work together for the effective implementation of the UNDRIP. We now jointly adopt the following recommendations and resolutions:

1. Enhance the capacities and awareness of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and youth, to understand, use and implement the UNDRIP and other international human rights instruments to promote, protect, respect and fulfill the rights of indigenous peoples.
2. Review, reform and formulate national and local laws and policies of states as well as policies of multilateral bodies to be consistent with and to adhere to the rights contained in the UNDRIP.
3. Strengthen solidarity among indigenous peoples and with other people's movements for exchange of experiences, learning from best practices, mutual support and developing common strategies.
4. Engage in constructive dialogues and strengthen working relations with government, UN agencies, intergovernmental bodies and international financial institutions and regional bodies towards coming up with policies and joint programs for the implementation of the UNDRIP.
5. Establish independent mechanisms at the local, national and international levels to monitor implementation and conduct periodic assessments of the implementation of the UNDRIP.
6. Raise the awareness on the UNDRIP of personnel of government agencies, national human rights commissions, commissions on indigenous peoples, and intergovernmental bodies and mainstream the UNDRIP within these institutions and bodies. Encourage these entities to develop their own programs on the implementation of the Declaration.
7. Raise public awareness of the dominant population on the UNDRIP and encourage the media and education system to integrate the UNDRIP in their activities and curricula.
8. Strengthen working relationships with civil society and non-government organizations at all levels and establish joint programs and activities with them on the implementation of the UNDRIP.
9. Use the UNDRIP as a key framework and guide for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (e.g., Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, etc.) at the national level especially as these relate to indigenous peoples.
10. Develop reports on good practices on how the UNDRIP is being implemented by States, the UN System, intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and non-government organizations and the obstacles faced in implementing the UNDRIP and submit these to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and other bodies of the Human Rights Council.

This is just the beginning. We still have a long way ahead of us. We should relentlessly strive to ensure that our rights as contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are protected, respected and fulfilled by the duty-bearers, the States, and by the UN system, other intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union and the Multilateral Financial Institutions, by the dominant populations and also by non-state actors such as corporations and the non-government organizations.

We therefore further resolve to pursue our commitment to advance these rights of indigenous peoples among our respective constituencies, and within our respective mandates and capacities, as we work to implement our collective action plan, herewith attached.

We here and now affix our signatures, as an expression of our consensus and commitment.

Signatories:

1. Maleya Foundation, Bangladesh
2. Khagrampur Mahila Kalyan Samity, Bangladesh
3. Development and Partnership in Action ICD-Ratanakiri, Cambodia
4. Naga Women's Union – Manipur (NWUM), India
5. Naga Hoho, India
6. Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago/AMAN), Indonesia
7. Partners of Community Organization (PACOS Trust), Malaysia
8. Borneo Resources Institute (BRIMAS), Malaysia
9. Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), Malaysia
10. Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Nepal
11. Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (National Federation of Indigenous Peoples/KAMP), Philippines
12. Kusog sa Katawhang Lumad sa Mindanao (Alliance of Lumad Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao/KALUMARAN), Philippines
13. Timuay Justice and Governance, Philippines
14. BAI (Alliance of Indigenous Women's Organization in the Philippines), Philippines
15. Innabuyog (Alliance of Indigenous Women's Organization in the Cordillera)
16. Indigenous Peoples Rights Monitor, Philippines
17. TAKDER (Cordillera Youth Movement for Peace and Democracy), Philippines
18. Koalisyon ng mga Katutubong Samahan ng Pilipinas, Inc. (Coalition of Indigenous Peoples Organizations/KASAPI), Philippines
19. Samahang Pantribu ng Mangyan sa Mindoro (Association of Mangyans of Mindoro/SPMM), Philippines
20. Cordillera Indigenous Peoples Legal Center (DINTEG), Philippines
21. Cordillera Peoples' Alliance, Philippines
22. Tebtebba, Philippines
23. Highland Peoples Taskforce (HPT), Thailand
24. Center for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas (CSDM), Vietnam
25. Center of Research and Development in Upland Area (CERDA), Vietnam
26. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
27. Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN)

28. Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)
29. International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)

This Workshop was participated by representatives of intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, observers and advocate groups:

1. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)
2. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
3. International Labour Organization (ILO) - Philippines
4. Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines
5. Asian Development Bank
6. Kawagib Moro Human Rights, Philippines
7. Bangsamoro Youth Assembly / Bangsamoro Youth Protection Network, Philippines
8. EED Task Force on Indigenous Peoples Rights (EED-TFIP), Philippines
9. Netherlands Center for Indigenous Peoples (NCIV)