

**Summary Report
First National ICCA Conference
March 29-30, UP-NCPAG
UP Dilliman, Philippines**

Background and Introduction

This event represents the culmination of the subnational workshops held in November 2011; and aims to create better understanding and generate support for recognition and respect for ICCAs in the country.

Selected IP representatives from the subnational workshops rendered their reports to the National Conference with the end view of generating responses and expressions of commitment from the State Actors and decision-makers, civil society leaders, and donor institutions to bolster support for ICCA; and to map out a national strategy and framework for ICCA in the Philippines.

Specifically the National Conference has the following objectives:

- To generate common understanding among IP organizations, non- government organizations, government and development partners; on the concept of ICCA, their value to the communities; and their contribution to biodiversity conservation;
- To strengthen awareness on the contribution of indigenous peoples in the management of ICCAs; the threats facing their sustainability; and enjoin concerned stakeholders into positive action to address these threats; and
- To seek consensus on the elements of a National ICCA Framework and Strategy in the Philippines, the guiding principles for engagement on ICCA; and the role of stakeholders, support organizations in its implementation.

Two key legislators were present to deliver their support: Senator Pimentel and Congressman Erin Tanada, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippine Congress. The Conference was attended by about 233 participants consisting of the following: 65 IP participants; 50 officials and staff from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); 25 representatives from other government agencies (Climate Change Commission, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Agrarian Reform, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, National Economic and Development Authority, Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Peace Process, and the Philippine Commission on Women); 10 representatives from local government units; 50 participants from some 18 NGOs; 28 people from the academe; 25 representatives from Embassies and international development organizations and 11 observers from media organizations.

Opening Messages

Dr. Edna Estifania A. Co (Dean, National College of Public Administration and Governance – NCPAG, University of the Philippines)

On the role of governance on the issue of indigenous communities and development - Governance deals with institutions, with people, and with governing institutions, communities and resources. It therefore plays a pivotal role on the issue of natural resource and indigenous peoples and how institutions relate among these concerns.

On the role of the Academe in indigenous communities preservation - The issues of indigenous communities, preservation and conservation of resources, and institutions are central in governance. The NCPAG continues to commit itself in the pursuit of governance including the pursuit of our indigenous communities.

Mr. Renaud Meyer (Country Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines)

“ICCA not only contribute to arresting biodiversity loss but to the overall ensuring of environmental sustainability, which is MDG 7.”

“ICCA, as they protect forests, which are rich in biodiversity and are a source of economic and cultural well-being of IPs, also helps in attaining MDG 1- eradicating extreme poverty and hunger”.

How to ensure the success and sustainability of ICCA? – “Three elements must be ensured: 1) recognition of the value of knowledge-practice-belief complex of IPs relating to biodiversity conservation; 2) empowerment of IPs to engage with the government and other stakeholders; and 3) preservation of IPs’ cultural diversity.”

Dr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – delivered via skype by Mr. John Scott, CBD)

“ICCA play important roles in the attainment of the Convention’s Strategic Goal C (improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity) and Target 11 (conservation of at least 17 % of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas). Without recognizing the roles of IPs and ICCAs, these goals for 2012 may not be realized.”

“The Philippines is a recognized leader on indigenous rights and the recognition of ICCAs. There is much other countries can learn from the experience of your country”.

The Philippines to continue to involve and inform the Secretariat of this ground breaking work and to report formally through the fifth national report to the CBD so that lessons and good practices in the Philippines can be promoted to other regions and parties.”

Hon. Aquilino Martin “Koko” D. Li. Pimentel III (Senator, Senate of the Philippines)

“The IPs have done much to preserve biodiversity in the country and they have immeasurable indigenous knowledge in biodiversity conservation and local governance that is a product of their experience over the centuries.”

“We should aid IPs in their desire to preserve their ancestral lands. Legislators should work for the better appreciation and institution of policies that protect the rights and lands of IPs”.

“Our indigenous people have been struggling for the preservation of their ancestral lands and our national environment over the centuries. And their efforts have been beneficial not only to their communities, but to the whole country. It is time that we too, extend our support to their struggle. It is time that we stand as one in nourishing our cultural well-being as well as preserve the world bequeathed upon us.”

Hon. Alfredo E. Pascual (President, University of the Philippines)

The UP commits to provide venues for discussion of, and produce research and new knowledge on pressing issues such as biodiversity conservation, the rights of indigenous communities, and climate change.

Through the National College of Public Administration and Governance, the UP will discuss, learn and develop new governance paradigms that can be adopted in communities to better protect the environment and sustain biodiversity, and translated into law to further strengthen the IPRA and develop an enabling environment to sustain ICCA.

The UP shall also provide technical assistance and partnerships with executive agencies, congress, local governments, civil society organizations and communities to help document indigenous knowledge and practices, improve capability to manage risks from natural disasters, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and strengthen the capacities of IP communities.

Hon. Ramon JP. Paje (Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources)
Delivered by Atty. Analiza R. Teh, Undersecretary and Chief of Staff

With the NewCAPP, being implemented by DENR in pilot sites, continuous recognition and empowerment of IPs as partners in biodiversity conservation can be ensured both in the national and international levels. Policies and programs can be threshed out to push forward the traditional management of biodiversity.

A key program of the President, the National Greening Program, prioritizes partnership with local and indigenous communities to provide the required quality planting materials. The DENR is also looking at incorporating the degraded areas needing restoration within ICCAs in the regional targets of the Department.

The DENR is also taking measures to examine the existing EIA system such that key biodiversity areas (KBAs), where most ICCAs are located, to be considered environmentally critical areas thus affording a level of protection similar to the formally established protected areas.

Role of Support Organizations on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation

Strategies and Directions of NCIP on ICCA in Relation to IPRA Implementation

Hon. Zenaida Brigida H. Pawid (Chairperson, National Commission for Indigenous Peoples)

In terms of the ICCA, the whole of the NCIP is more than 100% behind the indigenous peoples. NCIP also wants the full implementation of the FREE AND PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT in all ICCA activities and programs.

The Role of ICCA in the Philippines' Overall Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation

Manuel D. Gerochi (Undersecretary, DENR); presented by Mr. Nelson Devanadera, Assistant Director, Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau

The Philippine strategy to biodiversity conservation counts in the principles of governance, benefits sharing, equity and participation (including the participation of IPs).

Strategies considering the ICCA approach in support of biodiversity conservation include: expansion of ICCAs for conservation in key biodiversity areas (KBAs); ICCA recognition in the Philippines; Organizing of cross visit by IP groups to be able to share ideas and demonstrate benefits and processes; communicate IP concepts to different stakeholders; training for project partners in ICCA; Mainstreaming of ICCA in management plans; adoption of a national program for ICCAs; resource mobilization; development of DENR-NCIP policies to set up recognition of processes for ICCAs and their management within ancestral domains; and institutionalization of ICCAs in the Philippines.

The Role of Commission on Human Rights in Upholding the Rights of the IPs in their ICCAs

Hon. Loretta Ann P. Rosales (Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights)

The CHR is ready to defend the IPs and uphold their rights in their ICCAs. The CHR will continue monitoring human rights situations; conduct policy re-orientation of mining operations to take into account human rights; capacity building (provide training for IPs); investigation of violations; conducting dialogues with different parties; mainstreaming of the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in policy-making (recently, there has been a training of directors to localize the HRB Approach).

FPE's Directions and Initiatives on ICCA

Atty. Danny Valenzuela (Chairperson and CEO, Foundation for the Philippine Environment - FPE)

As a grant making institution on environment in the Philippines, the FPE has one of its focus areas on KBAs, most of which are within ancestral domains of indigenous peoples; and this emphasizes the critical roles of IPs in biodiversity conservation as recognized by FPE and other organizations in the environment sector. The work of FPE has always considered the rights of IPs and their participation in environmental governance.

There is a special policy for IPs to allow ease in application for grant in FPE. Simple forms and formats are also being approved by the FPE Board. FPE has entered into agreement with the

NewCAPP; FPE supports initiatives under the NewCAPP, through co-financing projects and programs.

FPE has been working on different ancestral domains of IPs in different areas in the Philippines and will be opening more sites soon.

Initiatives and Directions of Support Groups (NGOs) on ICCAs

Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Executive Director, Tebtebba Foundation)

The Tebtebba Foundation supports the idea of the ICCA. The framework of ICCA is an affirmation of the reality that many of the remaining areas or ecosystems that are still present are really found in indigenous peoples' territory.

ICCA supports the rights of IPs and their ancestral domains and the resources within them. While the Philippines is a signatory to various international environmental agreements, Corpuz noted that ICCA is a tool for government to implement its policies and comply with its international commitments.

In terms of ICCA, Tebtebba can help by helping indigenous communities register/enter as ICCA, by conducting trainings and workshops towards capacity-building of IPs;

ICCAs: International Perspective and the Work of the Global ICCA Consortium

Dr. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend (Global Coordinator of the ICCA Consortium)

Shared the definitions and concepts of ICCAs, and their importance all throughout the world. She also presented case studies of threats to ICCAs faced by IP communities in many parts of the world.

She cited the possible actions that can be done to address there. On the part of the IP communities, these include: internal organizing and analysis through study groups and systematization of knowledge; information dissemination, diplomatic action, legal action, and organized marches, rallies and demonstrations by IPs. A recent trend is how IPs and local communities have been strengthening themselves making them resilient in governing their ICCAs

She emphasized the concept of governance with respect to ICCAs. At the core issue is "who makes decisions" on what to do with resources, and the manner by which these decisions are made – questions of equity, transparency and accountability.

Among the important lessons learned from ICCAs, the following were presented:

- Crucial thing about ICCAs is that they are as good as the community that is governing them. IPs and LCs are necessary for the thriving of ICCAs
- Friends and allies in the civil society are essential support and partners.
- National government has international obligations vis-à-vis ICCAs. (Government can serve as a facilitator)
- ICCAs should not be recognized in only one mechanism. There are different ways or legal and policy measures for the ICCAs to be recognized.
- ICCAs best thrive in coherent land, water, and natural resource units governed by self-defined groups
- FPIC for the ICCAs is important
- External support for ICCAs can either be negative or positive i.e., outsiders can encroach on ICCAs, on the other hand, support can improve capacities

ICCA Registry

Ms. Colleen Corrigan (Senior Program Officer, Protected Areas, UNEP-WCMC)

Global reporting estimates of protection lack most ICCAs, and there is no current dataset on ICCA. The Worldwide ICCA Database was compiled from case studies from 18 countries. It was initiated in Barcelona on 2008. Phase 1 of the registry was completed on February 2009-September 2010 Phase 2 is on-going which started on October 2010-October 2012; while the release of the ICCA toolkit is expected from April-December 2012.

The purpose of the ICCA registry is to build awareness and knowledge on ICCAs worldwide, and document biodiversity values

She also discussed how the ICCA registry works, the kind of information contained in the registry, and the maps that will be presented in overlays. These overlays can be classified according to habitat, biodiversity, and global information.

She next presented the governance of the ICCA registry. How UNEP, experts and the consortium provide inputs, which are then processed, and included in the registry. She ended her presentation by showing the future directions of the registry.

ICCAs: The Local Perspective

Mr. Giovanni Reyes (Secretary General, KASAPI)

He explained that in the Philippines, ICCAs do exist, and have been instrumental in conserving large portions of the remaining portions of the Philippine forests in the country's key biodiversity areas (KBAs). He cited the case of practices of the Tagbanua's in Palawan, the Aetas in Zambales, the Manobo's and the Agtas, to name a few; whose traditional practices have conserved the forest areas and other resources within their ancestral domains.

He confirmed that existing laws support these ICCAs, such as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. However, there is a need to strengthen support to ensure the threats to the sustainability of ICCAs are addressed.

Presentation of the Results of Sub National Workshops

ICCA (Typologies, Characteristics and Value)

Mr. Samuel Balinhawang (Ikalahan Tribe, Imugan, Santa Fe, Nueva Ecija; and Executive Officer Kalahan Education Foundation - KEF)

He enumerated the various ICCA across the country, which were documented during the rapid appraisal made at the sub national Conference. ICCA covers terrestrial (i.e. forests, etc.) water (i.e. waterfalls, lakes, seas).

ICCA are important to IPs because these are used as burial grounds, shelter, worship areas. He explained that ICCAs are conserved and protected for purposes of territoriality, healing place, sanctuary, worship grounds, learning laboratory, source of income and livelihood. He concluded that ICCA covers various forms land, water, air.

Issues that Impact on the Traditional Management on ICCAs in the Philippines

Ms. Narcisa Dalupines (Tribong Jalawudoon, Bukidnon; Supanga, Calinog, Iloilo)

Summarized ICCA issues into five overarching themes: environmental, socio-cultural, economic, governance, and peace and order.

Environmental concerns related to ICCA

- Deforestation and forest degradation
 - Contends that IPs know better how to take care/ conserve the forests
 - Ill-advised government projects, like reforestation, which introduces invasive plants species. These projects receive big investments from government but actually have no benefits for the IPs
- Encroachment of destructive industrial operations
 - Raises the ire of the government's support to mining which is against the conservation of ICCA
- Use of destructive methods in obtaining natural resources
 - Reveals the indolence of some IPs to prefer easier methods which is against the conservation of ICCA (i.e. misuse of irrigation, poaching, etc.)
- Weak traditional beliefs and practices and poor implementation of customary laws
 - External influence weakens the traditional culture and institution

- Native traditions conflict with foreign religious belief systems.
- In some instances, new forms of entertainment like “Bikini Open” which are offensive to tribal elders are substituted for traditional dances.
- Exploitation of weak institutions (i.e. bikini open)

Economic concerns

- Limited livelihood opportunities
 - Limited economic opportunities forces IPs to sell their ICCA properties to survive
- Weak traditional governance structure
 - Counsel of elders are no longer consulted
- Issues with LGUs and government line agencies
 - Wrong support of government programs
 - Government programs gives no consideration to the traditional values of IPs
 - Overlaps between the role of line agencies and LGUs, on one hand, and traditional governance structures, on the other hand, lead to the weakening of the latter
 - Overlapping of tenure instruments like CADT and CLOA, for instance, is a serious matter that should be addressed.
- Development infrastructures within ancestral domain

Peace and order concerns (Wars (tribal and militarization and encroachment of armed groups within ICCA)

Impressions on Day 1

Ms. Teresa Gaspar
Tinglayan, Kalinga

She said it is good for IPs to learn what have been imparted during the Conference. It provides insights to IPs on how to further conserve their ICCA. She emphasized that IPs know better how to take care of the ICCA than outsiders. Conferences like these encourage other IPs to collaborate and support the initiative to promote and conserve ICCA. She highlighted that ICCA is important because it is part of the IPs’ territorial domain. She invited everyone- government, NGOs, CSOs and other IPs to collaborate and continue the dialogue to conserve and promote the biodiversity of ICCA. She also acknowledged the need to help one another to promote the ICCA advocacy.

Guiding Principles for Collaborative Work and Partnership in ICCAs

Datu Vic Saway (Talaandig, Lantapan, Bukidnon)

Based on discussions during the subnational Conferences, the IP representatives crafted the guiding principles for engagement with government, support organizations and IP communities in ICCAs.

He highlighted that the IP community are the prime movers of the ICCA

- Emphasized that the IP community have freedom within their ICCA (passed on to generations)
- Continues to observe the practices on indigenous knowledge, systems and practices
- Empower co-IP communities to preserve the ICCA
- Revive traditional practices
- Make ICCA a way of life, practices beyond mere words’
- Emphasized the need to consult the spirits because they are part of traditional culture
- There is a need to uphold guardianship of ICCA
- Acknowledge and recognize the contribution of everyone contributing to the conservation of ICCA
- Underscores that ICCA as a tool for environmental protection and care, development and peace-building
- ICCA encompasses dignity and integrity of the territory
- Emphasized that customary law should be the primary basis of formulating the guidelines on managing and planning the ICCA
- Highlights the need to empower IP communities

Role of government

- Government must recognize the rights of the IPs
- Must recognize ICCA based on the understanding of the IPs (i.e. native title or cultural identity)
- Emphasized that the Native Title is more valuable than 'created' laws of the government
- Provide support for the strengthening of the capacity of the IPs/ empower IPs
- Should not introduce systems which contradict/ conflict with cultural practices, etc.
- ICCA as a tool for environmental protection and care, development and peace-building
- Must support and understand customary laws
- Emphasized that IPs are willing and open to work hand-in-hand with the government

The Support Groups

- Provide guidance to simplify the process which is practical and understandable to the IPs
- Recognizes the rights and customary laws of the IPs
- Strengthening the capacity of IPs through introducing new systems

Datu Vic Saway expressed the shared hopes of the IP representatives present that the guiding principles will help strengthen and promote the ICCA.

Consolidated Action Plan on ICCA

Datu Ed banda (Manobo, Magpet, North Cotabato; Chairperson KASAPI)

The Action Plan represents the IP views on the action plan required to translate support to ICCA a reality. Among the components of the Action Plan are the following:

Establishment of partnership structures/ mechanisms

- Establishment of an ICCA Network/Council;
- Formulation of policies and adoption of processes for recognition and support (involves consultation and working with PAWB, NCIP, civil society organizations, etc.);
- Sub regional caucuses on ICCAs (involves establishment of convenors/ad hoc Committees; identification of eco geographic regions/island groups or clusters; and identification of activities per area;
- Linking up of indigenous communities in the national and international support groups to sustain ICCAs; and
- Setting up of a national registry of ICCAs.

Documentation, mapping, declaration and registration of ICCAs and resources

- Community consultations and meetings
- Resource inventory training;
- Research and documentation training;
- Collaboration with support groups and various government agencies and offices

Policy development for ICCA

- Establishment of mechanisms for integrating ICCAs in national and local planning;
- Mechanisms for meaningful participation of IP communities in planning for their ICCAs.

Capacity development

- Establishment of School of Living Traditions
- Integration of traditional knowledge and practices on environment and resource management in the curriculum at all levels.
- Presentation of community conservation plans to Department of Education and the academe
- Preparation of capacity development plan, involving cross site visits, both national and local; and establishment of capacity development plan working group; and
- Development and implementation of a capacity development plan based on capacity assessment to prepare the indigenous communities for alternative livelihood.

Financing of ICCA initiatives

- Explore payments for environmental services on ICCAs; and
- Development of alternative livelihood and skills development.

Responses/Statement of Support for ICCAs

Ms. Maria Molina (Deputy Head of Mission, Spanish Embassy)

The international community has understood and recognized the hardships of the IPs. The concerns of the IPs have been included in the international agenda as a result. Spanish cooperation has focused on IP concerns among others: recognition of the need to give priority to the IPs; and IP skills development through consultations.

The Spanish government has adopted the human rights based approach strategy to ensure IPs are the main actors and beneficiary of their own development. Completed priority programs include those in CARAGA and S. Luzon (8M euros since 2005) to alleviate poverty among IPs; and support to ancestral domain management and strengthening formulation of sustainable development programs

Expressed continued commitment and uphold this endeavour in the Philippines. The Spanish government has created an Iberian-Latin American initiative fund for IP to implement programs. This partnership allows Filipino IPs to interact with their Latin-American counterparts

Ms Molina commended the Philippine Government in the protection of biodiversity, IPs and conserved areas, with special mention of Convention of Biodiversity in 1992 and IPRA in 1997, right to ancestral domain; and in keeping with ILO convention 169. She also praised the initiatives of the conference which serves as a venue to address IP concerns especially the preservation of biodiversity in the Philippines

Ms. Agnes de Jesus (Senior Vice President, Energy Development Corporation)

She thanked the organizers for being invited as she learned so much from the Conference. As Chair of the Steering Committee of the UNDP-GEF Small Grants programme, as a Botanist and as Vice President of the EDC which has many operations within protected areas; she committed to bring the learnings to her work in these organizations.

She cited the initiatives of the EDC to pilot the beginnings of the social acceptability considerations in the EIA system; and the provision of livelihood and reforestation and watershed management programs to the communities, many of whom are IPs, in the areas covered by EDC.

Victoria Lazaro (Operations Officer, World Bank)

She sees no hindrance to the actualization of the goals of the conference. She cited the work of World Bank particularly OP 4.10, which seeks to protect/safeguard the rights of IPs. The principle involves more than doing no harm, but also more importantly, doing good. Doing good has more importance since doing no harm only resorts to avoidance.

She observed that FPIC system is doing more damage than good; and should be re-evaluated to ensure that the interests and welfare of IPs and their communities should be the priority.

She expressed the commitment to engage further in collaborative efforts for programs with IPs.

Indira Simboron (ADB)

She expressed gratitude for allowing her to participate in the conference as it provided the opportunity to witness an achievement in the realization of IPs rights to determine the direction of their own development.

The recognition of the existence of ICCAs is in line with the spirit of the ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement. This recognition will facilitate a smooth implementation of ADB supported projects involving natural resources and environmental management.

A newly approved Project funded by ADB and GEF – the Integrated Natural Resources Management Project (INREMP), will soon be implemented. The Project will address unsustainable watershed management in four priority river basins: (i) Chico River Basin; (ii) Wahig Inabanga in Bohol; (iii) Lake

Lanao River Basin; and (iv) Upper Bukidnon River Basin. ADB will support the ICCA initiative in the implementation of the INREMP.

She was also pleased to know that DENR and NCIP are both fully behind ICCAs, and are willing to work hand in hand; as these are the two agencies ADB is dealing with in many projects in IP areas.

Yolando Arban (IFAD)

IFAD has a number of projects that support the IP rights, improvement of their welfare, and recognition of their contribution to natural resources management. IFAD's policy on engagement with IPs forms part of its commitment to ICCA – cultural heritage and identity as assets; FPIC; community driven development; land, territories and resources; and promotion of IP knowledge.

To further support ICCA, IFAD will explore the following:

- In coordination with ADB as its co-financier, engagement in ICCA-specific strategies and activities in the forthcoming implementation of INREM under the aegis of the DENR;
- Recognition and eventual assistance for ICCA accreditation of IFAD-funded project sites;
- Continuing participation in ICCA policy dialogues, as IFAD requires further orientation on the finer points of ICCA as being promoted in the country; and
- Creating space for IP youth participation, access to resources, and benefit sharing from ICCA initiatives, thereby ensuring continuity of ICCA.

Atty. Jose Andres Canivel (Executive Director, Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation - PTFCF)

PTFCF recognizes the rights, knowledge and experience of IPs in protecting the environment.

The Guiding Principles serve as good guide posts in positioning the support of their organization to ICCAs.

Now that the plans and strategies are laid out, it would be very easy for PTFCF to review proposals submitted to it, particularly those coming from IP organizations. The ICCA placed a very good framework for their support to forest restoration and biodiversity conservation in the Philippines.

The PTFCF is now open to supporting proposals for ICCAs. Those interested may visit the website of PTFCF.

Ms. Len Regpala (TEBTEBBA Foundation)

She offered their capacity to provide training on integrated and sustainable approaches to self-determination which seeks to strengthen the community. There are three ways by which TEBTEBBA supports in strengthening the IP community:

- human rights based approach, *kauttubong kaalaman*,
- inter-cultural approach- being sensitive to the interaction of different cultures,
- ecosystems approach- considering and giving importance to the way IPs manage their territory based on the ecosystem (sustainable approaches)

She offered their capability to assist in training, research and documentation

Anna Katharina Kramer (Junior Expert, GIZ - Conflict Sensitive Resource and Asset Management in the CARAGA Region – COSERAM)

COSERAM works with IPs especially in Mindanao. The Program has been extended with a new component to look at IPs and biodiversity conservation. The Conference and the learnings from ICCAs will surely enrich the refinement of their scope in this new Component. She expressed interest to learn more of Filipino IP practices and hope to identify where IPs and their organization could have synergy and work for the common goal of promoting IPs.

Declaration on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Areas

Datu Vic Saway (Talaandig, Lantapan, Bukidnon); **Datu Ed Banda** (Manobo, Magpet, North Cotabato, Chairperson KASAPI); and **Elsa Dioayan** (Maeng, Tubo, Abra)

The Declaration – now dubbed as the “Manila Declaration” integrates the Guiding Principles and Action Plan into a document that the IP organizations issued to serve as the platform for support to ICCAs. The full document is attached.

The Manila Declaration was signed by the IP members present. A separate document, calling on support organizations to support the Manila Declaration was also circulated and signed by those present.

Responses to the Manila Declaration/Closing

Rep. Lorenzo Tanada III (Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Philippine Congress)

He responded to those actions directed towards the State, particularly the legislature.

He expressed hope that the commitments under UNDRIP, the IPRA can still serve as the avenue for the country to fulfil its obligations to safeguard the right to self-determination of the IPs in the Philippines. However, he cited that there needs to be institutional reforms in the NCIP to serve as an effective enforcer of the law. He acknowledged that the IPRA remains pure, it is its implementation that has been imperfect.

From the demands expressed, the Congressman saw the need to:

First, articulate anew the government policy towards indigenous communities, especially with respect to particularized problems such as the threats of extractive industries.

Second, recognize the role of our indigenous brothers as leaders in their own right, and respect their customs and practices, especially their unique relationship to natural habitat.

Third, extend concrete support for indigenous communities that adequately reflect our commitment to the recognition of indigenous communities as stewards of national identity and sovereignty.

He expressed hope that everybody can turn these observations into concrete plans of actions. He expressed his hope to receive the innovative proposals on how the aims of the Declaration can be achieved.

Zenaida Brigida Pawid (Chairperson, NCIP)

She affirmed the commitment of NCIP to reply/react to every point in the Manila Declaration within one week.

She also recognized that the IPs do not want to be separated from the Philippines, and hoped that next Conference should be organized by the IPs themselves.

Bae Helen Pojaras (Manobo, Tagkiling, Butuan City)

She expressed gratitude to the different groups and organizations, both local and international for their support to IPs, and their ICCAs. She also said “the full implementation of ICCA would further contribute to the protection of ancestral domains”. She thanked Representative Tanada for acknowledging the deficiencies in IPRA implementation; that 15 years after the law was passed, it has never been fully understood and felt by the IPs themselves. She reiterated that there is no competition between the different IP groups because they have the same goal.

Demetrio Ignacio (Undersecretary for Planning and Policy, DENR)

He acknowledged that IPs and communities are the best allies of the country's quest for sustainable development. He said “the ICCAs are closest to nature spiritually, culturally, socially, and

economically". The management systems of the IPs and participatory governance are things that people can learn so much from; and that all these have stood the test of time.

The Manila Declaration is a testament to the sincerity and dedication of IP communities to uphold their rights, protect their culture, nurture the environment and alleviate poverty. He committed that the DENR will always push for the Manila Declaration, bring in other agencies and sectors in government and strengthen its partnership. He cited that the support of all is needed to push for the agenda together, bearing in mind that the IP communities should always be at the center of the efforts.