Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development in Laws and Policies

By:
Honorable Nancy A. Catamco
Chairman, House of Representatives
Committee on National Cultural Communities
Ancestral Domains Protection

HB01220 “AN ACT EXTENDING THE PERIOD FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO EXERCISE THE OPTION TO SECURE TITLE TO THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS UNDER LAND REGISTRATION ACT 496 AND GRANTING A NEW FIVE (5)-YEAR PERIOD TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (NCIP) TO TAKE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION FOR THE CANCELLATION OF OFFICIALLY DOCUMENTED TITLES WHICH WERE ILLEGALLY ACQUIRED, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 12 AND 64 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8371, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS ACT OF 1997'”
• Culture-Sensitive Education

HB04220 “AN ACT RECOGNIZING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS, ESTABLISHING THE GUIDELINES FOR THE ACCREDITATION, MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION OF IP SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING THE NECESSARY GOVERNMENT FUNDS, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

HB01274 “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A FREE AND CULTURE-SENSITIVE SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION CONCERNING THE CIVIL STATUS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”
Oversight of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act

HB00985 “AN ACT CREATING A JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE FOR THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS ACT”
Human Rights, Justice and Peace

HB01078 “AN ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO NATION BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES “

House Bills numbered 401 and 659, PROHIBITING THE DISCRIMINATION OF PERSONS ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR ETHNIC ORIGIN AND/OR RELIGIOUS BELIEF
Genuine Implementation of the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)

HB02452 “AN ACT PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AFFECTED BY MINING OPERATIONS IN ANCESTRAL DOMAINS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7942, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'PHILIPPINE MINING ACT OF 1995'”
A. Bills Reported Out/Acted Upon

1. Approved on 3rd Reading

• House Bill No. 4420, in substitution of HB No. 2232 under Committee Report No. 206, AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 9 AS NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY AND MANDATING THE MEANINGFUL OBSERVANCE THEREOF
2. Approved at Committee Level

• **House Bill No. 2369**, ESTABLISHING AN INDIGENOUS TRAINING CENTER IN THE SECOND DISTRICT OF SULTAN KUDARAT;

• **House Bill No. 1071**, ESTABLISHING AN INDIGENOUS TRAINING CENTER IN KIDAPAWAN, NORTH COTABATO;

• **House Bill No. 97**, INSTITUTIONALIZING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IN ALL STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES THAT CATERS SOLELY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
3. Approved at Committee Level and Pending comments from other Committees

A. Committee on Appropriations
- House Bills numbered 98 and 355, including ethnic origin in the national surveys, censuses and other data-gathering methods conducted by the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA)

B. Committee on Ways and Means
- House Bills numbered 1274 and 1969, providing for a free and culture-sensitive system of registration concerning the civil status of indigenous peoples
4. Measures Deliberated Upon

- House Bills numbered 401 and 659, PROHIBITING THE DISCRIMINATION OF PERSONS ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR ETHNIC ORIGIN AND/OR RELIGIOUS BELIEF

- House Bill No. 4420, INSTITUTIONALIZING THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED)
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<th>Meetings/Public Hearings/Ocular Inspections Conducted</th>
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<td>• As early as the first meeting of the Committee on National Cultural Communities, majority of its members have manifested that a lot of effort needs to be done to ensure that the rights of the indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples as enshrined in the Philippine Constitution and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA) are respected. The members cited several measures that were thoroughly deliberated during the previous Congress but did not become law.</td>
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For the period covered, the Committee conducted:

1. eighteen (18) in-house meetings comprising both regular committee and executive meetings
2. one (1) technical working group meeting, and
3. two (2) roundtable discussions
4. attended meetings in connection with human rights abuses committed against IPs by mining firms and the subsequent entry of the military into ancestral domains to quell the communities’ resistance to these mining operations.
• As a result of these undertakings, the Committee came out with

1. six (6) committee reports on eight (8) bills and

2. four (4) committee reports on four (4) resolutions. Of this number, two (2) are committee reports on measures that are currently pending in the Senate.

3. Additionally, two (2) draft committee reports await the action of the Committee on Appropriations and Committee on Ways and Means, respectively.
1. A total of sixteen (16) bills,
2. ten (10) resolutions and
3. four (4) privilege speeches have been referred to the Committee.
4. Additionally, it received and acted on two (2) petitions from IPs and three (3) general communications from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).
Given the apprehensions expressed by IP leaders over the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the Committee undertook a series of (4) public consultations and three (3) site visits in the provinces of North Cotabato and Maguindanao, and Davao City in the third week of June 2014.
The Committee initiated/sponsored two (2) special projects, consisting of an IP Summit widely attended by IPs from all regions,

- a cultural expo,
- sent Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to attend IP conventions in Thailand, Malaysia and Spain,
- attended deliberations on the Bangsamoro Framework, and
- authorized the attendance of the staff to three (3) local briefings, trainings/seminars.
• While the Committee observes utmost patience and compassion in its dealings, it does not tolerate disrespectful actions from the IPs, executive department and line bureaus. To this end, the Committee issued two (2) *subpoena duces tecum* and two (2) *subpoena ad testificandum* to certain officials of the NCIP who continuously ignored the calls from the Committee to shed light on violent incidents involving two (2) tribes warring over royalty shares and ownership of a titled ancestral domain.
Given the urgency of the recent developments in peace and reconciliation in Mindanao, the Committee initiated three (3) public consultations conducted in the ancestral domains of indigenous peoples (IPs) in the provinces of North Cotabato and Maguindanao, and the City of Davao.
May we continue on with the advocacy we have for our Indigenous Peoples, continuously building up our desire and commitment to provide our IPs with hope and opportunity for them to achieve their dreams and aspirations of self-determination and to be recognized and respected as a people.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!