

Tebtebba

Volume 7, 2004



***2004: A Year of
Deepening Involvement***

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Tebtebba in 2004

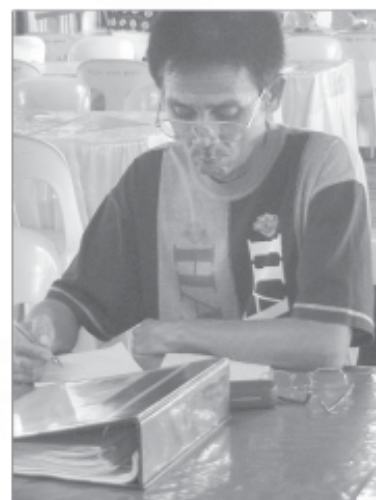
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Tebtebba

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TEBTEBBA'S DEEPENING INVOLVEMENT

By Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
Executive Director, Tebtebba

In 2004, Tebtebba continues to strengthen its influence in the international arena while further deepening its involvement in the national and local arena. Tebtebba is successfully linking developments in the indigenous world at the local to the national and global levels. It leverages its expertise in indigenous issues by creating more spaces for indigenous involvement in various issues of significance to indigenous peoples.

This discernible changes, as a result of the work of Tebtebba and other indigenous organizations, are the increased visibility of indigenous issues not only in the international arena but also in several countries where the indigenous peoples' movement is gaining strength. The increasing empowerment of indigenous women is also felt in many countries where there is conscious organizing and education work among indigenous women.

In 2004, the regional networks of indigenous women - particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America - held their regional conferences to expand and consolidate their membership. Tebtebba, which functions as the Secretariat of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN), focused its work in revitalizing the network and held the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference in March 2004. This was held ten years after the first conference in 1993. Since Tebtebba and AIWN placed emphasis in training more indigenous women leaders and activists, and building and strengthening their organizations, most of the participants in the second conference were leaders of organizations. This time the organizers were able to invite indigenous or ethnic minority women from China and Mongolia, countries which were not represented in the first conference.

While Tebtebba has achieved significant gains in the pursuit of its mission of educationg and promoting indigenous rights and building indigenous peoples' capacities worldwide, much needs to be accomplished. There is still a great need to raise the level of awareness of indigenous peoples on their rights, both as inherent rights and rights that should be recognized by

international and national laws. Furthermore, indigenous peoples have to be mobilized to ensure that existing instruments are enforced and national machineries tasked with the implementation of these laws and conventions, are functioning. Existing national bodies like commissions on human rights, women's commissions or commissions on indigenous peoples or tribal affairs bureaus, continue to have major problems in terms of their independence from the executive branch of government and in their capacity to implement the laws.

It is still crucial, therefore, to make indigenous peoples more aware of the existing mechanisms and instruments - both at the national and global level - which they can use to further strengthen the assertion of their rights, seek redress for injustices that have been committed, and work for the resolution of their complaints.

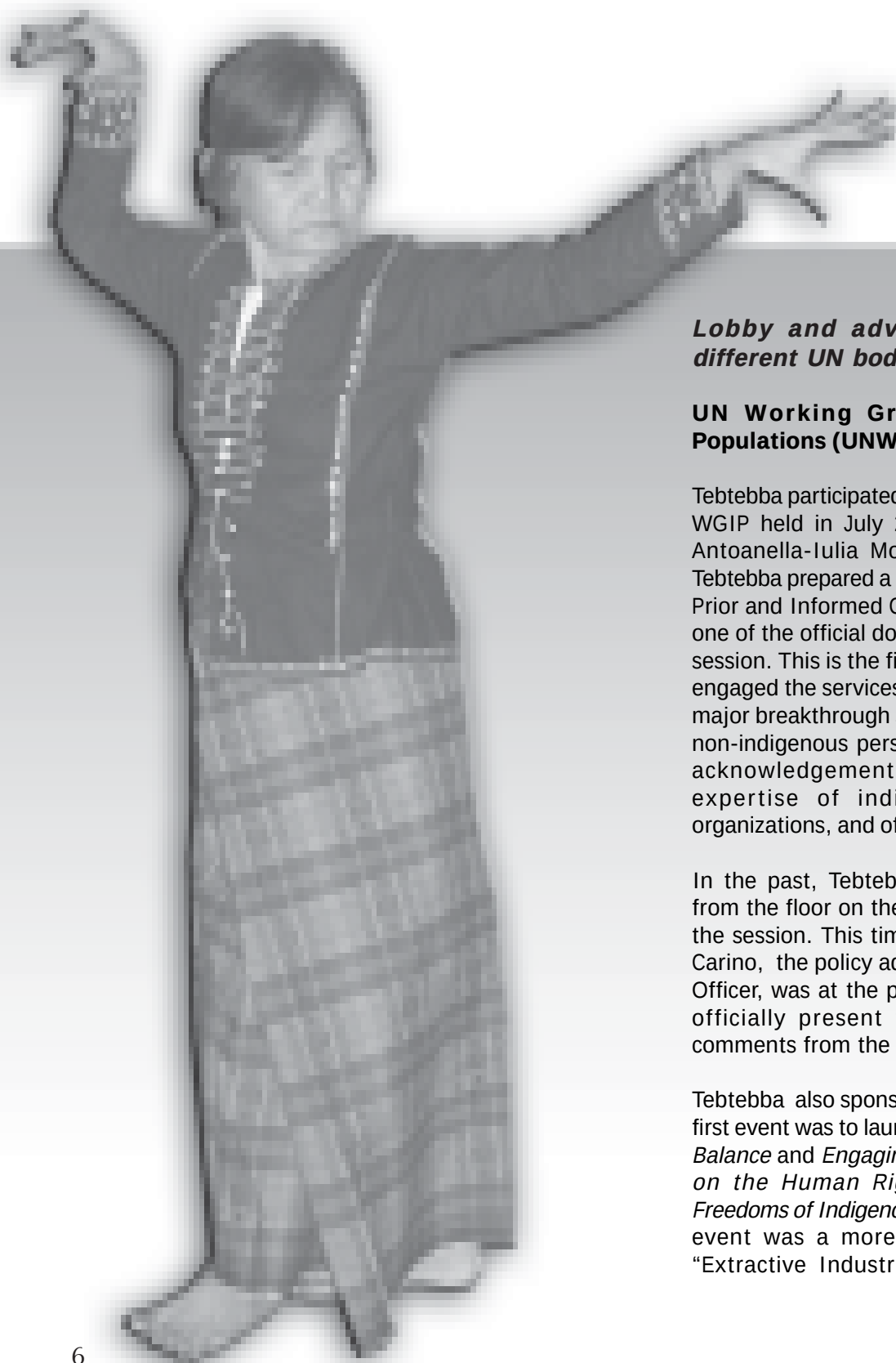
In many cases, in spite of the existence of international instruments and processes - such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, or national laws like the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of the Philippines - there is still a long way to go in terms of its implementation. Up to now, only 17 countries have ratified ILO Convention 169. These include developing countries from Latin America and developed Nordic countries like Norway and Denmark. No country in Asia nor Africa has signed on to the Convention while those who have ratified still need to implement the Convention.

It is equally important to make indigenous peoples aware of the existence of other laws and policies such as global and regional trade and investment agreements, as well as bilateral trade agreements. Included also are programs and policies of international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, etc.) which undermine indigenous peoples' rights.

At the same time, there is a need to raise the awareness of dominant society at the national and global levels on indigenous perspectives and issues. Discrimination and racism against indigenous and tribal peoples is still prevalent in many societies while indigenous identity remains unrecognized in many countries in Asia and Africa. On the other hand, the articulation of local issues of indigenous peoples at the global level, as well as linking these with international developments, continue to be undertaken.

Now that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) - the highest body in the UN dealing with indigenous peoples - has been established, the challenge becomes more demanding in terms of making indigenous peoples more aware of its existence and on how to engage with this body more effectively. The existence of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People is also an important development which indigenous peoples should know about and use more effectively.

INITIATIVES IN 2004



Lobby and advocacy work in the different UN bodies

UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP)

Tebtebba participated in the 22nd Session of UN-WGIP held in July 2004. Together with Ms. Antoanella-Iulia Motoc, a UNWGIP expert, Tebtebba prepared a legal commentary on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) which was one of the official documents discussed in this session. This is the first time that the UNWGIP engaged the services of indigenous experts - a major breakthrough since WGIP experts are all non-indigenous persons. This is therefore an acknowledgement of the capability and expertise of indigenous persons and organizations, and of Tebtebba as well.

In the past, Tebtebba would only intervene from the floor on the various agenda items of the session. This time Tebtebba, through Joji Carino, the policy adviser and European Desk Officer, was at the podium with Ms. Motoc to officially present the paper and receive comments from the participants.

Tebtebba also sponsored two side events. The first event was to launch two books, *Reclaiming Balance* and *Engaging the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples*. The other side event was a more in-depth discussion of "Extractive Industries and Free, Prior and



Informed Consent” where indigenous persons who had personal experiences on how these were being implemented in their countries took part.

An indigenous Subanon leader from Mindanao in the Philippines shared their experiences in dealing with a Canadian mining company and the government's National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. Another speaker was an Innu lawyer from Canada who represented his people in negotiations with INCO, one of the biggest mining companies in Canada.

From this side event, recommendations for follow-up were identified. One such recommendation was the offer from other indigenous organizations that they themselves would investigate what their national laws have to say on FPIC and its implementation. Tebtebba will further develop the FPIC paper which will be presented again in the 2005 Session of the WGIP.

In other side events, Tebtebba helped organize discussions on how to deal with the revision of the World Bank Policy on Indigenous Peoples (WB Operative Directive 4.20). This was both an information meeting to give updates to indigenous peoples on the developments related to this as well as to identify future strategies in dealing with the revision process.

UN-Commission on Human Rights Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate on a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Working Group on the Draft Declaration)

Tebtebba was centrally involved in developing the lobbying strategy for the WGDD. It was part of the

core group of indigenous representatives who discussed how to proceed with this work. The year 2004 was supposed to be the deadline for the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, based on the goals of the First Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1993-2004). However, this was not met and this has become one of the setbacks of the Decade. Tebtebba's engagement was to play a key role in mobilizing indigenous peoples to actively participate in putting substance to the discussions. A Conference Room Paper (CRP) developed by some governments (Nordic governments, Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada) became the basis of discussions aside from the original draft made by the Sub-commission on Human Rights.

This whole process altogether took three weeks (first two weeks at the end of September to October) with the final week scheduled for the first week of December. At the final week, Tebtebba, together with the Saami Council (organization of Saami peoples in the Nordic countries and Russia) formulated the indigenous conference room paper which became another basis for discussion in December. Because of these papers, there was a significant break from the hardline position of some indigenous organizations - that the original draft of the Sub-commission should be adopted fully. This is a non-starter for most governments and if indigenous peoples were to stick to this position, no progress in the negotiations will be made.

Tebtebba, along with Saami Council, were the only organizations that came up with a different position - that there has to be negotiations in the language if progress would ever be achieved. While many indigenous organizations agreed with this view, they

were hesitant in overtly supporting this stance lest they be accused of being “traitors” to the indigenous cause. When this view was openly challenged, many indigenous organizations finally came out to support this position.

Since work had not been finished but the mandate of the WGDD had already ended, lobby work at the Commission on Human Rights 61st Session had to be undertaken to ensure the extension of its mandate until a Declaration was finally adopted. Tebtebba, through its Executive Director, was elected the co-chair of the Indigenous Caucus and co-chair with the Chairperson of the Working Group during the informal sessions. The indigenous caucus planned future activities, more particularly in making other indigenous organizations aware of the developments on this field and also for lobbying at the Commission on Human Rights session for 2005.

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

The Third Session of the UNPFII was held in May 2004. The mandate of the Forum is to raise the awareness of the international community on indigenous issues; provide advice to the ECOSOC; and to coordinate the work of UN agencies, bodies and funds on how indigenous issues are addressed. The special theme for 2004 was on “Indigenous Women.” In this session, Tebtebba, with AIWN, presented the results of the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women’s Conference held last March 2004. The following were Tebtebba’s participation in this session:

- Made official written submissions on some of the Agenda Items. As an NGO with Special Consultative ECOSOC status, Tebtebba was able to submit papers on the various agenda items which became part of the official documentation for the session. These submissions contained Tebtebba’s key points on what were needed to be discussed by the Forum. These points include: free, prior and informed consent; data disaggregation; and consideration by the Forum to come up with a “State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples Report.”

In the Forum’s first session, Tebtebba pushed for FPIC to be a vital issue when discussing indigenous peoples rights and development. This has now been mainstreamed in the Permanent Forum as well as in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The “Baguio



Declaration,” the AIWN conference output, was also submitted and became part of the official documentation;

- Intervened under the various agenda items under discussion. The agenda items covered the mandated areas of the Permanent Forum which are: Education, Economic and Social Development, Environment, Culture, Health and Human Rights. The future program of work and also methods of work were part of the Agenda;

- Held several side events and spoke in several others. The side events were discussions on FPIC and on the Extractive Industries. A side event was also held to present the report of the Second Asian Indigenous Women’s Conference and was also a venue for a meeting with the members of the AIWN who were present.

In the AIWN meeting, some of the future plans discussed included the holding of a training on “Indigenous Women and Armed Conflict Situations in Northeast India.” Tebtebba also helped organize the Asian Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus which also served as a venue for coordination and training among Asian indigenous organizations for effective lobby work in the Forum. A reception hosted by the Asian Caucus was held and was attended by members of the Permanent Forum and indigenous representatives from other regions, as well as by support NGOs and a few governments. This was an effective way of reaching out to other participants and strengthening linkages with each other.

Lobbying for ILO Ratification

Tebtebba was involved in lobbying the German government to ratify ILO Convention 169. This was done through meeting various German government representatives and was jointly undertaken with the German NGO, the Society for Threatened Peoples. Various agencies such as the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Development Ministry and the Ministry of Justice were lobbied.

In the Philippines, the Executive Director of Tebtebba, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, met with the ILO Country Representative and other senior management officers to explore how they can support the work for the ratification of ILO Convention 169. There was a previous effort to do this but did not prosper due to the question of the legality of the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act. With the Philippine Supreme Court’s ruling upholding its validity, more possibilities to pursue this action have been opened.





Advocacy and capacity-building work on Traditional Knowledge, Biodiversity and influencing the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

For years, Tebtebba has been actively participating in the Article 8(j) Working Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This year, Tebtebba's involvement included other working groups: the Working Group on Protected Areas and the Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing.

At the 7th Conference on Parties of the CBD held in Kuala Lumpur in November 2004, Tebtebba was very active. Its involvement included:

- training for the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network at the indigenous peoples' preparatory meeting held in Sabah, Malaysia;
- together with Third World Network, influencing governments to recognize indigenous peoples' rights in protected areas, in protecting their traditional knowledge (Article 8j) and ensuring that their control and access to their lands and natural resources is recognized in the Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing;
- taking part in side events on traditional knowledge and genetically-modified organisms and the biosafety protocol.

What is happening now is that most of the work in the CBD will focus on national implementation. Therefore, Tebtebba decided that it should engage in building the capacities of indigenous peoples at the national level to get the governments to implement the Convention. It negotiated with the SwedBio, a government-sponsored program of Sweden which supports NGOs working on the CBD, to approve a project called the "CBD Capacity Building Project for Indigenous Peoples" in December 2004. This is a two year project that involves helping build indigenous communities' capacity to develop and implement the CBD in the local level. This will be implemented in seven (7) countries and involves the holding of several national and regional consultations.



This is currently in the early stages of implementation.

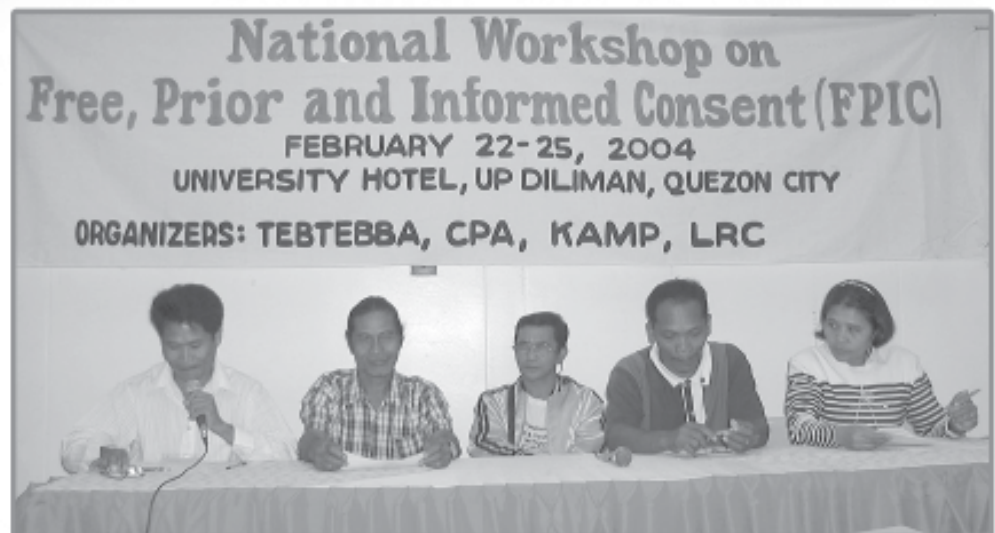
Work on developing standards, guidelines and the operationalization of Free Prior and Informed Consent

Tebtebba has been very active in elaborating and advocating for the recognition of FPIC and the assessment of its implementation. For indigenous peoples, FPIC is an integral part or expression of their right to self determination. FPIC, in simple terms, is that in cases where projects or activities are to be done in indigenous lands, “consent of indigenous peoples must be given freely; obtained prior to the implementation of such activities and must be founded upon the understanding of the issues and implications of such an activity.” Inherent in this principle is the right of indigenous communities to say “no” to any project they deem is disadvantageous to them.

In the Philippines, FPIC is recognized in the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act. Tebtebba held a National Workshop on FPIC last February. Case studies on FPIC implementation were presented and problems on its implementation were discussed. Over fifty indigenous participants including government representatives were present in this activity. To further deepen the discussion on FPIC, provide on-the-ground experiences of its implementation and make policy recommendations on how the implementation should be strengthened, a research on FPIC was initiated. The results of the research will feed into the discussion of the FPIC in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2005.

Continuing involvement in the EED Task Force on Food Security

The Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) Task Force on Food Security is a project of the different EED partners in the Philippines. EED or the Church Development Service of Germany is the main supporter of Tebtebba’s work. As an active member of the Task Force, it presented the results of the research on Food Security in Suquib, Besao, an



indigenous village in northern Philippines, in March. Tebtebba was also identified as the focal point for the research on agricultural liberalization and its impact on indigenous peoples, coordinating the different case study writers. The output is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2005.

Tebtebba’s involvement in the Task Force has resulted in close working relationships with the other EED partners. It is playing a key role in raising the awareness of EED partners on indigenous issues and perspectives. Its knowledge on the different issues concerning indigenous peoples such as those on food security, agricultural liberalization are appreciated and recognized by the partners.

Active involvement in national and international campaigns on mining

Mining has become a very vital issue among indigenous peoples in the Philippines. This is because

the Philippine Supreme Court finally gave the “go” signal for full implementation of the Philippine Mining Act and the entry of foreign companies. This is in line with the Philippine Government’s prioritization of mining in its 10-point agenda for development.

As a result, foreign and local companies have intensified or resumed their operations, most of these located in indigenous lands. Tebtebba’s engagement in the mining campaign in the Philippines encompasses community, regional as well as national level activities. In the national arena, it has involved itself with national formations against mining such as the *Alyansa Tigil Mina* (Alliance to Stop Mining) and with different indigenous groups, legal advocates, church and church-based groups, environmental NGOs. It has attended several multisectoral meetings, press conferences and protest actions.

In the local, provincial and regional levels, Tebtebba has been providing assistance in terms of training, awareness-raising on indigenous issues, and providing analyses from an indigenous lens. In the Southern Mindanao island, Tebtebba has helped organize workshops such as the Canatuan Workshop in August where a mining campaign was agreed upon; co-organized the Mindanao-wide conference on mining where it helped formulate resolutions, among others. In the third quarter of 2004, Tebtebba

also helped facilitate the exposure trip of several Canadians to monitor TVI, a Canada mining company, which has been the subject of numerous complaints by the indigenous Subanens of Mindanao. In the province of Mindoro where indigenous communities have been opposing the Aglubang-Mindex mines, Tebtebba participated in the protest action last November 29 involving the local government units, schools, church groups.

In the international level, Tebtebba works closely with Third World Network in formulating analyses and campaign strategies against mining.

Tebtebba’s involvement in the mining campaign has made the indigenous dimension a major issue in the national and local anti-mining campaigns. It has been actively educating communities and organizations on indigenous peoples’ rights and in putting indigenous concerns and perspectives in the forefront. Linkages with indigenous organizations have also been enhanced.

IPGREN and establishment of IPGREN-Philippines

Work on the Indigenous Peoples’ Global Research and Education Network (IPGREN) for the year entailed follow-up and finalization of the Synthesis Report and



proceedings of the first meeting in December 2003. Constant communication among the core members was also undertaken. Several planned researches and training activities were not undertaken due to funding limitations. However, the IPGREN has been tapped to help undertake several key research projects such as the CBD capacity building for indigenous peoples project.

A training was held in November 2004 in Mindanao. This was attended by 45 indigenous community leaders based in the southern island of Mindanao. The main trainer was Fergus MacKay, an expert on international law and indigenous peoples' rights, who is an indigenous person himself. This was jointly undertaken with Indigenous Peoples' Links, an NGO based in the United Kingdom, whose work is focused among indigenous peoples in Southern Philippines.



The training proved useful for the indigenous community leaders as it provided them opportunity to enhance their understanding of their inherent rights and the different international and national legal instruments which they can use in the assertion of these rights. These include the provisions of international human rights laws, treaty and

A major achievement for the year was the establishment of the IPGREN-Philippines. Two workshops on education and indigenous peoples were accomplished in February and in August. These workshops were attended by over thirty (30) indigenous educators from the academe and the community where they shared their experiences and came out with a research agenda for IP education work. Seven indigenous organizations form the core of the Philippine network.

non-treaty bodies within the international system and national law, the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. This activity also strengthened Tebtebba's linkages with these indigenous organizations and their leaders and activists.

Training on Indigenous Peoples Rights and International Humanitarian Law, November 2004, Philippines

The 1st Philippine National Indigenous Women's Conference, January 23-26, 2004, Baguio City, Philippines

With Tebtebba's growing linkage and involvement with other indigenous organizations and communities in the Philippines, an urgent need to conduct series of training on indigenous peoples' rights and international human rights instruments was identified.

This was part of the series of national indigenous women consultation identified as preparatory activities to the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference. The main objectives of the conference were to bring in indigenous women in the Philippines, come out with an indigenous women situation, and identify needs of the organizations.

The conference was attended by more than 20 indigenous women's organizations all over the

country. Tebtebba was a main organizer of the event, together with other indigenous women's organization in the Philippines. The conference helped Tebtebba to network with other indigenous women's organization in the country.

The 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference, March 4-6, 2004, Baguio City, Philippines

The 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference was successfully held last March 4-6, 2004. Its objectives among others, were to revitalize the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) and come out with an understanding of the situation of indigenous women in the region.

The 2nd AIWC was attended by over 100 participants from 11 countries. During the conference, country case studies were presented, focusing on the impacts of globalization on indigenous women and on the human rights situation of indigenous women. A *Baguio Declaration of the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference* was drafted and approved by the participants.

The 2nd AIWC provided a very good opportunity for Tebtebba to network with various indigenous women's organizations that were not previously members of AIWN. Several indigenous women's organizations also requested Tebtebba to help in capacity building. Recognition of its role in the network was also reaffirmed as the Secretariat was again decided to be based in Tebtebba.

Asia NGO Preparatory Meeting for Beijing Plus 10 Review

The AIWN and Tebtebba participated in the NGO preparatory meeting for Beijing +10 which was held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2004. Here Tebtebba managed to bring several members of the AIWN to participate. These were the focal points from

Nepal, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines and Malaysia. It brought into the discussions the perspectives of indigenous women and a side event was also held where the situation of indigenous women in Asia and conflict situations were presented. Among those who participated were Amnesty International and the Association for Progressive Communications-Women's Networking Training (APC-WENT), who committed to help support campaigns against violence against women in armed conflict situations.

Indigenous Women's Training in NE India

As an offshoot of the 2nd AIWC, Tebtebba was invited by the women-participants from North East India to organize a women's training. This was held in November 3-6, 2004. Twenty participants from five states in India attended. This provided a very good venue for the participants to come together for the first time and share their experiences and identify their needs. A concrete result was the setting up of the North East India Indigenous Women's Forum.

Strengthening linkages with government agencies

The year 2004 saw the strengthening of Tebtebba's linkages with the different government agencies in the Philippines, notably with the National Commission



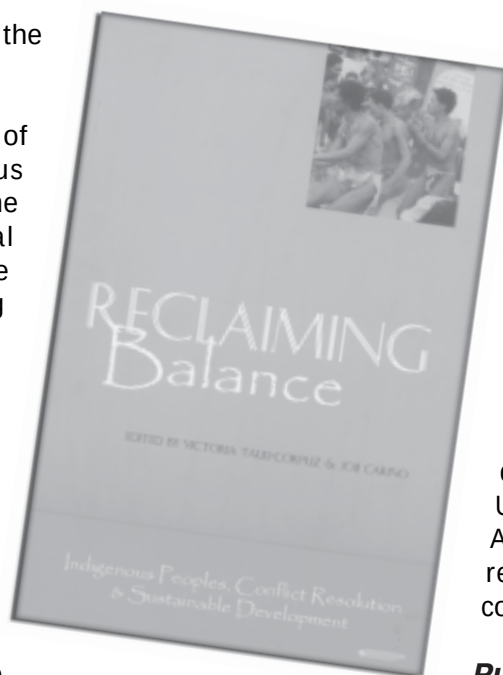
on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), in the local as well as national levels.

Tebtebba was invited to be part of the Committee on Indigenous Peoples' Concerns (CIPC) of the government's Regional Development Council in the Cordillera region. This is a grouping of the different government bodies. Tebtebba's involvement was two-pronged: provide inputs and analyses on the proposed government's Regional Indigenous Peoples' Plan and help organize the Indigenous Peoples' Month in October.

Tebtebba gave several inputs to the working groups of the regional plan while Tebtebba practically coordinated the celebration of the Indigenous Peoples' Month. It helped organized several forums and radio programs. As a result of Tebtebba's involvement, its ability to influence these agencies' plans and activities have been strengthened. This has also provided Tebtebba an opportunity to raise awareness of these agencies on indigenous issues and on the rights-based approach to development.

Capacity building in the CHT, Bangladesh

The Capacity building project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh is a continuing commitment of Tebtebba. As the project reached its last year, Tebtebba was involved in the terminal meeting held in February. Tebtebba was asked to help in the drafting of a new 3-year proposal for the project. Tebtebba also hosted five local indigenous CHT organizers who underwent an exposure program from April to July. The exposures visited several indigenous organizations and communities in the Philippines and attended several key activities relating to indigenous peoples.

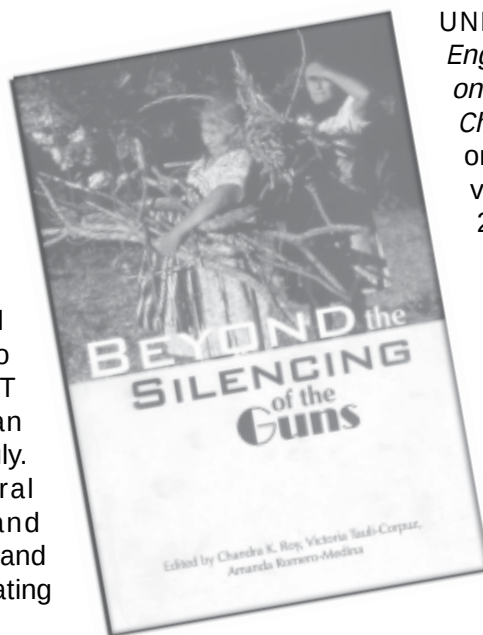


Tebtebba's involvement in the project has helped the CHT organization's capacity to implement their projects and to formulate the proposal for the new phase. The exposure program helped in providing experience in actual community organizing work and helped establish linkages with the different groups in the Philippines. As a result of our involvement in the project, donor agencies such as the UNDP, Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) have recognized our role and have consulted Tebtebba on the CHT.

Publication and launching of books on conflict resolution and the Special Rapporteur Report

Several books dealing with conflict resolution were released in 2004. These were the books on *Reclaiming Balance: Indigenous Peoples, Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Development* and *Beyond the Silencing of the Guns*. The first book is a compilation of case studies written by indigenous peoples in different countries while the latter includes case studies by civil society and was supported by the UNDP. The third book, entitled *Engaging the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous People: Prospects and Challenges*, provides lessons based on Tebtebba's involvement in the visit of the Special Rapporteur in 2002, a guide on how for indigenous peoples on how to tap the process; and case studies submitted by indigenous groups in the Philippines.

These books were successfully launched in the UN and in the Philippines and have been widely appreciated by indigenous groups, advocates and multilateral bodies.



BROADENING GAINS

Linking the local to the global and the global to the local

As mentioned in the earlier section, Tebtebba remains on track in achieving its objectives. Linking and articulating local issues of indigenous peoples at the global arenas and bringing global developments to the local level have been achieved in several ways.

FPIC

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a very local issue. It basically revolves around the effective and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in making decisions on policies, programs and projects which affect their day to day lives in their territories.

Tebtebba managed to represent this issue very well at the international level by getting the Permanent Forum and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations to talk discuss this and start the process to develop standards and guidelines on how this should be implemented at the local and global levels. Tebtebba facilitated the documentation and participation of indigenous peoples at the UN level to represent their issues and recommendations on how the principle of FPIC can be promoted and respected by state and non-state actors. The Philippines Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, which has a section on FPIC and guidelines on how to obtain FPIC, has been one of the areas of continuing study and documentation done by Tebtebba.

Indigenous Women, gender issues and conflict resolution

With the holding of the 2nd Conference of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) Tebtebba helped expand and consolidate this network which has, in a sense, been inactive in

the past years. Tebtebba, together with other indigenous organizations, lobbied hard for the adoption of “Indigenous Women” as the theme of the 3rd Session of the Permanent Forum. This opportunity served very well the purpose of articulating the

issue of indigenous women at the UN and getting the process of Beijing Plus 10 review to deal with indigenous women. The training workshops, held at Bangkok during the Asian NGO Preparatory Conference for Beijing Plus 10 and at Northeast India, were very important in sharing the results of both the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women’s Conference and the 3rd Session of the Permanent Forum. In Northeast India, as a result of the training-workshop, the indigenous women-participants from the seven Northeastern States of India, agreed to create the Northeast India Indigenous Women’s Forum. It was the first time that they convened and saw the value of having this network among themselves.

The fact that Tebtebba was finally able to publish the book, *Reclaiming Balance*, was helpful in further projecting the issues of conflict and sustainable development. This contained the proceedings of the international conference which Tebtebba organized in 2000. The issue of conflict resolution is a key issue, especially for indigenous peoples in Asia, where many armed conflicts are still raging in indigenous communities. The strong request to have this book translated into Spanish comes from indigenous organizations in Latin America who find themselves in similar situations.

Tebtebba was also able secure training materials of Amnesty International and Rights and Democracy on “Documenting cases of violence against women



in armed conflict situations” which were reproduced for AIWN members. This was also the content of the training-workshops held with indigenous women.

World Bank Safeguard Policies on Indigenous Peoples

Since Tebtebba was involved with the revision process of the World Bank on Indigenous Peoples, it managed to hold several consultations with indigenous peoples from various parts of the world. These were done during the gatherings at the international level where many indigenous leaders and activists were present. Tebtebba’s case studies on Extractive Industries and Indigenous peoples were published in the book *Extracting Promises*. This book was very helpful for indigenous peoples who are confronted with these problems. Tebtebba’s lobbying with the World Bank to make their policies respect the basic rights of indigenous peoples, has to a certain extent, influenced the revised draft. However, the Executive Board of the Bank are still hostile to the idea of giving indigenous peoples the right to self-determination including free, prior and informed consent. The activities within the UNPF and WGIP will, however, have an influence in strengthening this right, even if the Bank has not recognized this.

Effectively using the Special Rapporteur Mechanism

Dr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People has already visited several countries as part of his mandate. In 2003, Tebtebba helped organize the UNSR's Philippine mission. The experience in organizing his visit to the Philippines gave Tebtebba more concrete ideas on how to help indigenous peoples use UN mechanisms to redress their own situations of injustice and oppression. The book *Engaging the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous People* was one of the most popular books that Tebtebba has published. This is because it gives clear ideas for indigenous organizations and NGOs on how to make use of this mechanism. The challenge is to ensure that the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur are implemented by governments. How to get the governments to implement his recommendations is Tebtebba's next objective.

Articulating and projecting indigenous peoples' perspectives and analysis of issues.

Through lobbying and participation in international and national processes, Tebtebba has played a key role in further projecting indigenous issues. Its proposals on how to carry forward the work on FPIC; indigenous women and conflict resolution; standard setting and its role in synthesizing the experiences from the ground and raising this at

various levels helped shaped the way discussions on these issues are now being handled. Even at the CBD, the views of Tebtebba on how to proceed with the various working groups are considered to by indigenous peoples and even by governments.



Empowerment of indigenous peoples and in particular, indigenous women

Tebtebba's contribution to empowerment of indigenous peoples is very substantial. The results of this can be seen in the increasing number of indigenous organizations or networks who are already capable of generating their own resources for them to be able to operate and undertake initial research and write-ups of their own situations and issues. Examples of this are the Hilltracts NGO Forum (HTNF) in Bangladesh, the member organizations of the AIWN who are now in the process of strengthening their own organizations, the IPGREN network members who are being involved in case study preparations in their own countries.



STRENGTHENING LINKAGES, CAPACITIES AND INITIATIVES

Overall, in 2004, Tebtebba substantially implemented its program of action whether in the local, regional, national, or international levels. This has resulted in successfully linking and relating global events, policies, concepts to the national and local arena. Linkages with the different indigenous organizations have increased substantially both in the national as well as in the international levels.

In the Philippines, Tebtebba has linked up with several indigenous organizations by supporting their local issues and struggles; helping strengthen their capacities organizationally as well as in conceptualizing and launching campaigns; supporting indigenous women's groups; and involving them in initiatives that develop their ability to put forward their demands.

Even among government agencies, such as the Philippine National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the regional governmental body Committee on Indigenous Peoples Concerns (CIPC-RDC), Tebtebba has been consulted on a regular basis and its views, analyses and perspectives respected and considered.

Nowhere is Tebtebba's level of credibility in the global arena more pronounced than in the support that Tebtebba's Executive Director was able to gather in her nomination to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Indigenous organizations, and specifically from indigenous women's groups, have



seconded her nomination, paving the way for her appointment to the UNPFII. Tebtebba's work with indigenous groups, for example in the CHT in Bangladesh, and with indigenous formations, such as the Indigenous International Forum on Biodiversity, the Indigenous Peoples' Water Caucus, continues to be recognized.

Multilateral bodies such as the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) consult with Tebtebba on a

range of issues concerning indigenous peoples and launch collaborative initiatives with Tebtebba. These include researches, evaluation, activities, book projects, to name a few.

International bodies, funding agencies and NGOs continue to establish partnerships with Tebtebba on their specific areas of concern. One such project is that on CBD capacity building project with indigenous peoples, supported by SwedBio of Sweden. These groups have also offered support to major activities such as the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference, the FPIC research, among others.

In 2005, Tebtebba shall build on these achievements to further strengthen and broaden its work. It shall focus its resources and efforts in educating and helping build indigenous peoples' capacities, whether in the local, national or international levels, for them to be able to assert their rights and empower their organizations and communities.

Feature:

Making Research and Education plausible:

Milestones of the Indigenous Peoples' Global Research and Education Network (IPGREN)

By Leah Enkiwe-Abayao

The increasing interest in conducting research and education efforts on indigenous peoples has posed challenge to indigenous peoples' organizations and to indigenous peoples as well. There is today a growing concern among indigenous organizations to conduct their researches for their own consumption and not to rely on what scholars have to say about them. Parallel to this is the realization that there is a need to develop their capacity to conduct research catered to their own needs. Thus, there is a need to balance research expertise with that of grounded data. This is deemed crucial to indigenous peoples as they live in an increasingly globalized world. A project emerged to respond to this concern and has now moved towards building a network of indigenous organizations.

From its conception at the International Conference on Conflict Resolution, Peace-building, Sustainable Development and Indigenous Peoples held last December 2000, IPGREN coordinated only through electronic communications until its birth in 2002 when at least seven representatives of indigenous organizations worldwide met face to face to work on the initial stages of building the network.

The network primarily serves as a venue for indigenous organizations to share, plan and act on a common research agenda. Activities planned are foreseen to serve as a mechanism to enhance the capabilities of their organizations to conduct researches that will directly aid their advocacy work. IPGREN is still a loosely organized network as members continuously assess their strength and capabilities along future programs. In the interim, Tebtebba acts as the secretariat of the network.

Currently, seven Indigenous organizations/ individuals committed themselves to the network. They are:

1. *Indigenous Information Network - Masaai* (IIN) of Kenya;
2. *National Khoisan Consultative Conference* (NKOK) of South Africa
3. *Instituto Muni'kat* of Gutemala;
4. *Hill Tracts NGO Forum* (HTNF) of Bangladesh;
5. *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN) of Indonesia;
6. *Tebtebba Foundation* of the Philippines;
7. *Confederacion Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indigenas y Negras*



del Ecuador Versalles (FENOCIN), Ecuador;
8) Bineet Mundu of Jarkhand, India.

IPGREN held its first formal meeting of partners on December 10-12, 2003 in the Philippines. With its theme *Research and Education on Indigenous Peoples: An Assessment and Planning workshop*, this activity was well attended by all the representatives of the network members.

The workshop aimed to:

- 1) make an assessment of the past and present studies done on indigenous peoples in countries of network partners;
- 2) Identify the research gaps/needs of indigenous peoples in each country and present this country situationer; and
- 3) Plann common/comparative action-research agenda for the IPGREN for at least the next three years.

During the workshop, each IPGREN member presented the initial country research reports focused on the state of researches done on indigenouss peoples, state of IP education and IP situationer

in their respective countries. Commonalities of the data presented highlighted the fact that research was largely conducted by non-indigenous peoples and by the academe. More so, the topics or themes covered by these researches were highly segmented and ethnically blinded and most often, are found in library shelves for professional or academic use. It therefore shows no relevance or usefulness to indigenous peoples, reducing them simply as objects for research.

Similarly, matters on education show the following aspects:

- 1) The official medium of instruction in schools is in the colonizer's language;
- 2) There is a dearth of education materials done in local indigenous language, and if there are, these are made through the intense lobbying work of indigenous peoples ;
- 3) bilingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic education is a developing concept among indigenous peoples especially in Latin America. Regarding bilingual education, there are still concrete experiences that indigenous peoples themselves are learning from and from which the conceptualization is being further developed.

For instance, the indigenous content and pedagogies must be reflected in the curriculum. The very essence of bilingualism does not allow national standardization within the state educational system because the issue of language arises. Thus respect and support for local initiatives must therefore be given. There is also a need for the identification of what is necessary for local use and that for national distribution.

The country reports on the status of

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IPGREN Philippines

A workshop on Indigenous Peoples' Education was organized on February 27 - 28, 2004 by Tebtebba Foundation, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Centre, KAMP (National Alliance of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines) and Philippine Indigenous Peoples Links (PipLinks). The workshop was envisioned to be a venue to:

- 1) Share experiences on indigenous peoples' education work (in terms of contents, activities, approaches, and methodologies);
- 2) Identify the needs in relation to indigenous peoples' education work; and
- 3) Agree on action plans and cooperation to strengthen education work.

In the planning workshop, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba's Executive Director, reminded the participants to think of how indigenous peoples and indigenous organizations can address the continuity of education work and campaign.

The following were identified as important venues:

- 1) Representation at the Barangay (Village) School Board;
- 2) The need to understand further other venues in which indigenous concerns can be dealt with and not rely only on what the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) can offer;
- 3) The development of a popularized training module on Indigenous People's Rights especially with respect to indigenous territories;

- 4) The need to address the transmission of indigenous knowledge (IK) particularly on the roles played by "cultural masters." The possibility of having an "Indigenous Training Center for Indigenous Peoples" was raised;
- 5) The need to write about policy guidelines for culture. For instance, guidelines that address problems brought about by outsiders such as researchers who take pictures without asking permission, etc. It was also expressed that indigenous peoples should consider possibilities of imposing penalties to people and to institutions are involved in the mishandling of indigenous culture.

From this workshop, Vicky Tauli-Corpuz expressed the idea of "interphasing" of plans and activities to encourage sharing of existing training materials and other resources. The discussion led to the introduction of IPGREN. The participants expressed interest in forming the national network which marked the informal launching of IPGREN Philippines.

Concerted efforts to sustain networking among members of IPGREN Philippines was promising. In November 2004, a training on "Indigenous Peoples' Rights and International Law" was held due to the needs expressed by the IPGREN Mindanao partners. The training brought together 30 key leaders from Mindanao to a one-week training with Fergus Mackay, an indigenous expert on indigenous peoples' rights in International Law as the trainor. Tebtebba and PIPLINKS organized this event.

education and researches on indigenous peoples in the seven country-presentations produced critical findings showing commonalities in conditions shared by indigenous peoples. The highlights of the researches also served as points for discussions during the meeting. The central concerns discussed were:

- Functional literacy is necessary for the empowerment of indigenous peoples, especially women, in order for them to be informed of and be able to understand their rights. Citing fieldwork results conducted in Kenya, Clement Lenashuru of IIN remarked that “Educating (empowering) a girl is educating (empowering) a community. Educating [empowering] a boy is educating [empowering] an individual;”
- Imposition of an educational system by the state on indigenous peoples is both a challenge and opportunity;
- Indigenous peoples hold high regard for education, but governments lack political will to develop school facilities and instructional materials. Attempts of

governments to integrate indigenous concerns in curriculum have either been a combination of stereotyped misinterpretations or romanticizing the savage past;

- There are few NGOs that have indigenous research and education component in their work;
- The issues and problems on indigenous education are subsumed in a broader spectrum of social realities especially problems such as poverty, development programs and government programs and policies geared towards modernization. Crucial is the violation of basic human rights such as resource ownership (land, forest, water, others);
- In recent past, there has been a growing interest among the indigenous peoples themselves to write about their own people, experiences, analyses, and recommendations;
- Funding support for researches goes to the academe, either as individual effort or institutional project;
- The notion that “research is for experts” is prevalent, and this marginalizes indigenous peoples who do not have the necessary academic

Milestones of the Indigenous Peoples’ Global Research and Education Network (IPGREN)



qualifications even if they are competent enough;

- There are still governments that deny the existence and rights of IPs. The case of Bangladesh and Indonesia were key cases discussed.

After a long discussion of these concerns on education and research, IPGREN members planned activities and programs that were intended to address these issues and problems. The following were identified:

- Develop educational materials based on studies conducted by indigenous peoples and incorporate these in school textbooks schools;
- Conduct training on research skills geared towards capacity building in indigenous communities so that they can be able to come up with their own situationers, write their own experiences, analyses, programs and actions and thus own the knowledge;
- Researches must use interdisciplinary approaches which are nearer to the indigenous experience since thematic approaches make indigenous peoples appear segmented and therefore easier to be manipulated and exploited;
- Develop guidelines on research ethics and how to negotiate with researchers. It was agreed that there is an urgent need to remind communities to monitor researchers entering their area and discuss what is allowed to be researched. More importantly, the impact of research should go beyond dissemination. How to use action research in advocacy and how indigenous peoples can maximize these are important points to be considered;
- Need to review the UN Decade of the World's Indigenous People;
- Need for development of gender studies;

- Bilingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic education must be developed in order to bridge the real experiences of children in their families and communities on one hand and the school on the other;

- How to influence, if not encourage, the ethnic and gender disaggregation of survey data such as census done by government agencies.

Of the items discussed above, the following were identified as priority agenda for IPGREN:

1. **Need for research skills development.**

This involves training IP researchers with appropriate and practical methodologies based on assessed training needs so as to efficiently address skills and technology transfer in particular contexts. The methodology shall incorporate IP systems of information gathering/sources i.e., oral tradition;

2. **Publication/ information dissemination of research results –matters of accessibility to the widest population as possible and at all levels.**

IPGREN can play a role in generating and disseminating information on indigenous concerns. Matters of sensitive knowledge, e.g., Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)/ patenting should be handled by mechanisms appropriate to particular social and cultural contexts. There is also the challenge to sensitize the media, formal education sector and other institutions regarding indigenous peoples' concerns. The integration of elders into formal education system is also sought;

3. **Formation of national IPGREN networks.**

This will facilitate the implementation of the planned activities of the network.

Feature:

CHT Study Tour in the Philippines

Advancing Development Work Among Indigenous Peoples

By Salvador Armando Ramo

On April 20, 2004 five development workers from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh visited various indigenous peoples communities in the Philippines for a three-month study tour program.

The study tour for indigenous Jummas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the Cordilleras was initiated to supplement the ongoing capacity-building program for CHT non-government organizations (NGOs). This program, which ended in December 2004, launched the partnership of the Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF) and Tebtebba. It was thus timely that the study tour was conducted, providing development workers from CHT NGOs appropriate and practical “on-the-job” learning.

The choice of the Cordillera as the “laboratory” for the study tour was most natural. Aside from Tebtebba, which had closely worked with Jumma organizations and leaders, CHT NGOs had built solidarity work with the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), a major indigenous organization in the region. It was therefore appropriate that the tour program would be conducted under the aegis of these three organizations, the HTNF, CPA and Tebtebba. Joining the tour program as sponsors and facilitators for the Mindanao sorties of the study

tour were *Sildap Sidlakan* in Tagum City and the Solidarity Action Group for Indigenous Peoples (SAGIP) in Davao City.

The main objective of the study tour project was to provide the participants opportunities to gain practical knowledge through observation and exposure in actual organizing work in the Philippines. Secondly, the study tour asked the participants to disseminate and share their experiences and knowledge to their communities and organizations in the CHT, thereby enhancing the results of this study initiative.

It is highly expected that the study tour project would strengthen the links between the indigenous peoples of the Cordilleras and the CHT, as well as to forge new alliances and solidarity relations with more groups and individuals in the Philippines. A major concern of the project is to provide the participants the opportunity to observe and learn how the gender dimension is integrated in the development work of organizations in the Philippines.

The participants

Five development workers from various HTNF

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organizations were chosen on consideration of geography, gender, ethnic group, lines of work and commitment:

- Udvasan Chakma, 29 years old, male, was a student leader for 10 years;
- Reta Chakma, 24 years old, female, is the chairperson of Sangbi Mahila Kalyan Samity, an organization of community women in Rangamati;
- Aung Shwe Sing, 28 years old, male from the Marma community, which is the second largest indigenous group in the Hill Tracts and is the Executive Director of Tah Zing Dong, an NGO from the Bandarban District;
- Bimalendu Chakma, 39 years old, male, and the coordinator of the Center for Indigenous Peoples Development, an NGO in Rangamati;
- Mathura Bikash Tripura, 30 years old, male, and is the Executive Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity.

Practicing indigenous systems is asserting indigenous peoples' rights

The tour participants were amazed at how many indigenous communities continue to practice and assert their indigenous socio-political systems (ISPs), amid inroads of modernization and globalization. The practice of ISPs and the stories of how these are asserted, are in themselves examples of best practices, which can be adopted elsewhere.

- Land is a communal property, which should be nurtured and defended. The concept of ancestral domain, which even the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) recognizes, pertains to ownership of specific territories by certain tribes, based on natural title, passed on by ancestors, through time immemorial. Ancestral domain includes the settlement areas and farmlands, rivers, forests and hunting grounds, burial grounds, the ground underneath and even the air and the spirits;
- Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a powerful tool for indigenous peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and defend



their integrity in the economic, political, military, social fields and in all aspects of their existence. FPIC, supposedly recognized and upheld by the Philippine government, requires indigenous peoples consent on projects, programs and activities conducted in their territories;

- Land use and management is done, through swidden farming - which is also still widely practiced in the Hill Tracts - or terracing of whole mountains. Specific tribes use an agricultural calendar to determine the times for sowing, planting, weeding and harvesting. Appropriate rituals are made. An interesting research by the Montanosa Research and Development Center of Sagada in Mt. Province, Cordillera region, found out that these rituals had scientific bases. On many occasions, the tour participants would wonder aloud how terraced plots, located thousands of feet in the mountains, are supplied with water.

- The practice of the *dap-ay*, of the indigenous Bontoks, reflects the democratic character of the society of particular tribes. Elders (*pangats*) lead the community in discussing important matters in the *ator* or *abong*, the community center. After arriving at a consensus, the *pangats* would take on the responsibility of implementing the decision. Their indigenous justice system is applied to violators and miscreants, who would be sanctioned, ostracized or



banished from the tribe, depending on the gravity of the offense. *Pangats* also hear and dispense the appropriate punishments. In Mindanao, among the indigenous lumads, the counterpart of the Igorot *pangats* are called *datus* and *timuays*.

- The village warriors are mandated to implement the sanctions. They are also assigned the task of defending the tribe from aggressors and enemies of the tribe. The Kalingas, Bontocs and the *baganis* of southwestern Mindanao are some examples of these. It is unfortunate however, that some of these indigenous practices are manipulated by government and vested corporate interests, to pursue projects and programs that ironically undermine, divide and abuse the indigenous peoples. Dams, tourism, mining, anti-insurgency campaigns and reforestation are just a few examples.

- Indigenous peoples' forest management systems are also practiced, asserting themselves over the government's commercially oriented forest programs like the integrated forest management agreement (IFMA)

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and the community-based forest management agreement (CBFMA). The Bontoks have their *tayan* and *batangan*, the *lapat* for the Tingguians in Abra or the *muyong* and *pinugo* for the Ifugaos

The forests are sources of food and forest products, for local consumption and for sale. Being part of the tribe's ancestral domain, indigenous communities collectively maintain and defend them. They regulate resource gathering, mining and swidden farming. Likewise, individuals share the benefits derived from the forests.

The application of appropriate technology and socio-economic projects for communities always require community involvement in the planning, implementation and management of projects. NGOs, which bring in these projects, act as facilitators and partners. On many cases, projects are introduced in communities when there are consolidated peoples' organizations. It is unacceptable to do projects when there are no organizations or when the organization

is weak. Examples of projects visited by the tour participants include a micro-hydro dam for irrigation and electrification of very remote villages, powered rice threshing machine and blacksmithing. Others include pathway construction, irrigation canal, seed dispersal and animal dispersal. An important principle learned is that community ownership of the projects is key to sustaining them.

The tour participants did not see any distinct difference between lowland Filipinos and indigenous peoples. Their physical features are almost alike, unlike in Bangladesh where Bengalis and Jummas are immediately recognizable. They observed that there seem to be no conflicts between the two peoples. One indigenous Igorot explained that Filipino indigenous peoples suffer "national oppression" from the elite-dominated majority. Development aggression like destructive mining, forestry and dam projects, discrimination, oppressive laws, militarization, misrepresentation and bastardization or commercialization of indigenous cultures, are some representations of national oppression. Nevertheless, the same Igorot person declared that indigenous peoples are one with the Filipino people in their struggle against their perceived basic problems.

Let a thousand flowers bloom

"Arouse, organize, mobilize," were calls which the tour participants cannot miss. These were the main messages in the Community Organizing Training module, which they reviewed during the study tour program, and which they had observed from organizers and members with whom they had interacted.

The tour participants were amazed at



the number of organizations and the acronyms they had to memorize. There seemed to be an organization representing every sector of society - from the community level, municipal, provincial and regional alliances to the national organizations. Issue-based organizations and alliances are also organized. NGOs existed side-by-side with the sectoral, territorial and issue-based organizations at every level. All these organizations had close coordination, taking on rights-based and peoples' issues as well as national and even political issues.

The tour participants observed that the youth and students sector were adequately represented in varied organizations like Christian, Protestant and Muslim youth, college editors and writers, cultural activists, students councils, indigenous youth, fraternity members, and others. Teachers, lawyers, church people, women, children, gays and lesbians, overseas Filipino workers, medical professionals and government employees are organized as well, something that is remotely possible in Bangladesh society. These organizations lend support to the sectoral organizations and alliances of the workers, peasants, urban poor and fisherfolks.

There was a realization that through these organizations, the peoples movement can use their strength to intervene in electoral politics, like the party list system during the recently concluded national elections, where six of them won seats in the Philippine Congress.

A lot of women lead organizations at various levels.

The tour participants observed that leaders and ordinary members even in remotest places seem aware of big

issues like "globalization" or "imperialism." They even expressed surprised that a nun or a bishop can speak of progressive ideas or actively participate in the peoples' struggles, something that they cannot imagine a Buddhist *bhante* (monk) can do back home.

There is a realization that peoples' organizations could also take on and actively participate in the peace process and peace negotiations involving the underground revolutionary movement. In fact, they learned that the people can obtain some gains from their involvement in the peace process, like the moratorium to house demolitions in the case of the urban poor, the increase of wages and benefits for workers, or punish erring army personnel involved in human rights abuses.

The tour participants realized that organizing could be done by employing various innovative forms and methods. In the case of the urban poor of Irisan in Baguio City, the election campaign was maximized to organize the people against the demolition issue. The election issue was also maximized to gain support from the seemingly "unaffected middle forces and candidates." In Nabunturan, Compostela Valley, the campaign to save the park is an innovative way to pursue organizing work against large-scale mining. Likewise, the tour participants found it interesting to pursue organizing among catechists and social action workers in the local Catholic church in opposing mining.

In Besao, a village in Mt. Province in Northern Philippines, the indigenous socio-political institution like the *dap-ay* was maximized, to mobilize the community against the privatization of Lake Banao. In the indigenous

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communities of New Corella and Kapalong, education programs were employed as tools for organizing and mobilization. In times of intense militarization, for instance, teachers follow their pupils where they evacuated, to continue the classes, explain the causes of militarization and its effects on the people. Putting in progressive ideas in songs, dance, mime and theatrical presentations can be powerful means to organize and mobilize the people.

Perspective-setting through inputs and training programs

Three training programs were organized for the tour participants during travel breaks to maximize time.

The review on the Community Organizing Training (COT) was helpful in deepening their understanding, given the experiences in holding several training sessions back home and observing practical applications of its principles and methods in communities visited in the Philippines. Some recommendations to refine the module were expressed during the discussions. The training on Investigative Journalism was seen as useful for the preparation and publication of human rights reports and other analytical documents. The practicum part was an interesting learning activity, where the principles and methods of investigative writing were applied and critiqued. The Speakers Training was held to prepare the tour participants in their speaking engagements in the University of the Philippines – Baguio. While needing more refinements in many aspects, they did fairly well, as their audience, composed mostly of students, faculty and development workers, cheered appreciatively.

Several inputs were conducted for the

tour participants. These included the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), the Mining Act of 1995, Philippine History, the Mining Process of Small-Scale Miners, issues, problems and situationers about places visited like Itogon, Mankayan, and the indigenous communities served by Sildap, in Mindanao. These inputs helped the tour participants in understanding the issues and struggles of the communities as well as put in proper context the campaigns that they are involved in.

The input on Management and Administration work, provided by Tebtebba was instructive because it gave the tour participants the opportunity to see how it was being applied in achieving Tebtebba's vision, mission, goals and programs. Also, the input allowed them to compare their experiences and practices in their respective NGOs. The input on Management also emphasized the differences between NGOs and peoples' organizations (POs), whereby the former provide support systems and services to the latter. NGOs operate through the mandate given by a Board of Directors. The POs' reason for existence is the general membership and its constitution. This is one area where CHT NGOs could devote some efforts.

Infusing indigenous knowledge systems in alternative education

Among the indigenous peoples of Mindanao, tribal chiefs strongly put forward their conviction in defense of their lands. "We can never sell our lands to a Bisaya, a lowlander and outsider; because the land is our life. Selling land to an outsider is an unforgivable crime for us."

This principle is included even in the

curriculum of the Alternative Education System (ALE) that is run by the indigenous communities in Davao del Norte, a province of southeastern Mindanao. The school teaches primary education to children covering grades 1 – 6. The ALE is one of the best practices that left a strong impact on the participants. Many learning points were noted for possible replication in NGO programs in the Hill Tracts,



including:

- The schools, which were established in seven lumad communities, operate on the basis of reconciling traditional practices with scientific analysis, as well as promoting the indigenous peoples' knowledge systems, culture, traditions and practices. The objective of which is to liberate the indigenous peoples from exploitation and oppression by the state;
- The schools adopt the following principles: It is pro-lumad,

it is relevant and nationalist, it is critical and scientific, it is collectively run, it is child-friendly and gender sensitive and it is environment-friendly;

- The schools employ numerous techniques and ways of developing the capacities and skills of the pupils. The teacher-facilitators adopt methods and approaches such as using indigenous materials, and teaching indigenous songs, riddles and games. Sometimes, they move classrooms to different venues, depending on the nature of the lessons. The facilitators also require homework and specific projects, research assignments, actual observations and experiments, instant quizzes, recitations and oral reading from the pupils. They also conduct occasional analysis exercises and problem solving, workshops and reports. Elders and community folks are also enjoined to participate in the learning process through story telling in the classroom program and mobilizing them as resource persons. Other innovative learning methods include community collage, fora within the classroom, debates and exposure trips;

- The sense of commitment of the teacher-facilitators is noteworthy even if they receive little pay, or face great risks in performing their tasks. In spite of these, they find satisfaction and fulfillment in what they do. They declared that teaching in the school is part of their contribution in the lumad struggle for self-determination;
- The community's sense of ownership in their schools is strong. The people built the schoolhouse

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and provided food for the workers. They contributed for the salaries of the teacher-facilitators by cultivating crops in the nearby mountains and breeding livestock, poultry and pigs for the school fund. The guardians feel that these deeds are not for any individual person or organization but for their children and their future;

- To make the program sustainable, the School Committee collects P1.00 (US\$.02) from every pupil every week. This fund is deposited in the bank as savings in the name of individual pupils. When a child completes elementary education after six years, the money is withdrawn to pay for the education cost in high school;

- Sustaining the schools is also defending it. For the Lumads, defending their land is vital to ensuring the schools' sustainability. In case somebody tries to deny them access to their land, they declare a *pangayaw* (war) against the enemy. The lumads can mobilize their *bagani* or the community warriors for this purpose;

Each school covers about 70-80 households. One to two communities can get access to education from one school. Sildap has two types of schools - the Direct and Indirect Schools. Direct Schools are operated by the community and Sildap while the Indirect Schools, are operated by the government, after having been handed to them by Sildap. In the latter's case, Sildap and the community continue to monitor the school to ensure that the learning principles are strictly followed. This year, two such schools were handed over to the Department of Education.

Combining organizing with rights-based advocacy

The tour participants learned that human rights work is a broad movement, involving all sectors of society and their organizations. It is partisan in the sense that it takes the side of the poor, disadvantaged and marginalized sectors.

Human rights work should involve the middle sectors and professionals like lawyers, doctors and medical practitioners, church leaders and workers, humanitarian and cause-oriented organizations and progressive politicians and government leaders. Because of their positions in society, or their moral influence like the church, they can give credence to human rights work. These professionals can be encouraged to contribute to human rights work by maximizing their expertise in their line of profession. Lawyers can provide legal services to human rights cases, church leaders could appeal for reason and or moral suasion to stop human rights abuses, and so on.

The tour participants learned that there are myriad forms of actions which can be employed to raise human rights awareness or call attention to violators such as legal, meta- and extra-legal actions. Fact-finding and medical missions can be conducted in areas where there is intense militarization in the affected area. Doctors, lawyers, church leaders and the media can join peoples' organizations and NGOs.

Prayer vigils and prayer rallies are conducted among church advocates. The practice of indigenous rituals and local traditions can be transformed into legitimate protests. Even cultural forms can be used to advance the cause of



human rights like songs, dances and street plays. Inside prisons, victims can pursue their legitimate demands and rights, through press conferences, noise barrages and hunger strikes or even seemingly innocent actions.

Winning the struggle halfway, with women participation

The tour participants observed that Filipino women are also leaders, not only in the women sector, but also in organizations composed of men and women, a reality which is remote in their experience.

In their discussions and sharing with several women leaders and their organizations, the tour participants learned that there is a conscious effort by all to mainstream the women issues and concerns in the movement. One significant learning point is that women were given not only space, but also support systems, to allow them to have more time for organizing and involvement in social concerns. Some examples include providing for child-minding and day care centers for women organizers, family-counseling

involving husband and wife, shared parenting and shared responsibilities in the home, such as cooking, minding the house or doing the laundry. In many instances, the domestic concerns of a woman NGO staff-organizer, who may be assigned to far-flung villages, is taken on by everybody in her office.

To further build their capacities, women are enjoined to actively participate in mass struggles as partners. Their involvement has earned for

them leadership positions in organizations. But this did not happen overnight. Neither is this already a common reality in the Philippine society.

In the halls of Congress

The idea of a street parliamentarian, an ordinary worker, farmer or an urban poor activist, becoming a Congressman may seem absurd. But it was possible, in the experience of the Philippine elections, through the party list system, where a woman activist and a former peace negotiator for the underground movement, became the newest additions to the Philippine Congress.

The law on party list provided opportunities for peoples' organizations and marginalized sectors to earn seats in Congress. The peoples' movement, with the strength of its organizations, could maximize the party list system and the electoral struggle to pursue it rights-based advocacy. It is one arena opened to complement the "parliament of the streets," where it is presently strong.

Learning from the best practices of Filipino organizers

Learning from the best practices of Filipino organizers

The tour participants believe that the party list concept is an innovative way of providing marginalized sectors access and voice in the parliament. Given the chance, they believe that this concept should be adopted in their country. This and other election-related experiences gave them a front seat view of how elections are conducted in the country. The election also allowed them to compare their electoral experiences in their country.

Campaigning against development aggression

"Mining is a source of wealth and woe to many Filipinos," Bimalendu Chakma, one of the tour participants thought aloud. His colleagues agreed, as they visited one mining community after another in the Cordillera, in Mindanao or elsewhere.

Truly, the mining issue dominated the campaigns and struggles of many communities, including many indigenous communities. It is a major campaign issue, among several other "development aggression" projects like dams, commercial forests, commercial agriculture and a gamut

of indigenous people-insensitive and environmentally destructive projects. With mining, rich agricultural lands and settlement areas sank, water sources dried up, ricefields despoiled and rivers polluted. Whole communities were dislocated or deprived of livelihood sources. The saddest part is, communities have become bitterly divided over these projects. Intense militarization and human rights abuses have been reported in many of these mining areas.

The tour participants realized that the ornaments made of precious metal they avidly seek for in Bangladesh and India is not only a product of hard work, but also entailed high social costs. They learned that community people lose so much, while big and foreign miners immensely benefit from the country's bounty. They also learned that the government was a willing accomplice, providing full backing to the foreign mining companies. Small-scale mining activities of many communities, on the other hand, are reflective of the peoples' assertion over their resources, as well as their survival. Much should be done though to regulate small-scale mining activities and mitigate the impacts made on the environment.



Finally, the tour participants believe that the mining issue could spawn more peoples' actions, as the people would discover more innovative and creative ways of defending their lands, livelihood, the environment and life itself.

Cultural forms as instruments for change

The tour participants realized that integrating cultural forms in development work, in organizing and in speeches, could make a big difference. People, especially those from the remotest of villages, could easily grasp ideas and concepts or enjoined to take actions when culturally appropriate methods are employed.

Indigenous songs, dances, skits and other practices should not just be an exotic display and entertainment for tourists and curious observers. Work in the cultural field is a powerful tool for organizing, education, information, mobilization work and campaigns.

In most meetings, activities, rallies and programs that the tour participants attended, they were amazed at how cultural work has been creatively integrated. In their meeting with the Cordillera cultural activists in the *Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera* (Cordillera-based cultural indigenous group), the tour participants realized that cultural work should be a conscious and organized effort. They believe that this is one best practice that can be adopted in their communities.

Only in the Philippines

Observing and learning bits and pieces of everyday Filipino ways amazed and amused the tour participants.

They observed that Filipino development workers and activists are a disciplined lot.



They share in the work, line up to get food or take a jeepney ride, serve themselves, wash their own plates and help in the cooking. Mathura recalled that a big covered stage used during the Cordillera Day, an annual event to commemorate indigenous peoples' struggle in the region, was kept in boxes in a matter of minutes. All other temporary fixtures were cleared, leaving the site to its previous appearance – a pasture lot.

Filipinos come in simple clothes, hold simple programs without so much frills, and relate to each other as equals. They are friendly, helpful and hospitable. Of course, these are not exclusive traits of Filipinos.

The road system is generally good in the cities and the urban areas. They become narrower and dismally bad in interior areas. A highway system carved out of the mountainsides reached as high as 7,500 feet, the highest point in the Philippine highway system. The tour participants would cringe at the sight of a narrow highway, overlooking a deep ravine, while the bus driver would go real fast. They would feel fearful and thankful to the *habal-habal* (motorcycle) driver, carrying four passengers in his motorcycle, for bringing them to their

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cooking their food to treat Filipino friends and hosts at Tebtebba.

destination safe and sound, as he negotiated a craggy trail. They would be thrilled at their “trip to heaven,” as they crossed mountain roads, at zero visibility, because the roads were completely covered with fogs and clouds.

The tour participants were thrilled and amused about their first experiences: sleeping under the rain with only a poorly-erected tent for protection; hardly able to fit in a small-scale tunnel; seeing how gold was processed; being able to shout like other Filipinos “para manong” (Stop please) when getting down the jeepney and seeing so many stones, enough to construct a house, among others. They would feel extra proud learning some local expressions like “magandang umaga” and “salamat” (good morning and thank you).

Food was not a problem. Like their daily dose of turmeric and curry, they easily adopted to the local food. Some were bold enough to try exotic food like *taho* (sweetened tofu), fishball and one-day-old chicks; but not *balut* (boiled duck egg) or the foul-smelling durian fruit. Generally though, Filipino food was just like Jumma food. They also enjoyed

Jumma peoples ambassadors of goodwill

The major achievement of the study tour project is the forging of solidarity relations with all persons and organizations whom the participants met or came in contact with. No opportunity was missed to exchange notes about the issues, problems, stories and struggles of each one. This solidarity relation is concretely put into practice with the opening of a listserve account in the internet. The listserve account is called hilladongs@yahoogroups.com. It is maintained and moderated by Mathura Tripura on the Bangladesh side.

The hilladongs@yahoogroups.com will serve as a forum of information exchange on the developments of issues and struggles of the Jummas and the Philippine indigenous peoples. The Hilladongs forum can go further into advocacy and limited campaigns like petition signing and letter writing on specific cases of serious human rights abuses.

The study tour project ended on July 12, 2004.

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Feature:

The Struggle of Indigenous Women in the Philippines and Asia

By Aida Priscilla T. Cadiogan

The first quarter of 2004 was a busy period for indigenous women with the holding of two significant events in Baguio City in the Philippines. The first national indigenous women's workshop for the Philippines was held on January 23-26. This led to the formation of the national network of indigenous women in the Philippines, known as Bai. Bai is a Lumad (indigenous people of Mindanao, southern Philippines) term meaning a well-respected woman with an unwavering commitment in upholding the rights and interest of the community especially their right to land. The plan to hold this national workshop or conference has long been a plan by indigenous women in the Philippines but it never took place due to several reasons.

The second event was the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference held on March 4-8, 2004 also in Baguio City. This saw an increased and broadened membership of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN). This was a follow-up to the first conference that was held way back in 1993 with only several indigenous women's organizations participating.

First National Indigenous Women's Workshop in the Philippines

We have to build upon the gains we have achieved and address more wholistically the problems of indigenous women. Clearly the problems of the non-recognition of our rights over our lands and our natural resources, the militarization of our communities, the destruction of our traditional livelihoods because of import liberalization and development aggression, and the commercial- ization and misrepresentation of our cultures, among others are interrelated. Therefore, it is important to address these more comprehensively.

So goes the challenge given by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba's Executive Director and convenor of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network, in her keynote address on what needs to be done by indigenous women at the First

National Indigenous Women's Workshop in the Philippines. The workshop had 58 indigenous women participants including advocates coming from almost all the regions in the Philippines where indigenous peoples are found - from the Cordillera Region in the north, central Luzon and to the southern Mindanao region in southern Philippines. The workshop was sponsored by Tebtebba together with the Organizing Committee composed of KAMP (the national alliance of indigenous peoples in the Philippines), Gabriela (the national alliance of progressive women's organizations), Innabuyog (the regional alliance of indigenous women's organizations in the Cordillera), the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center (CWERC).

As espoused by Leonora Membrot, chairperson of Innabuyog-Gabriela, in her welcome address, this workshop was a historic event in the progressive movement of indigenous women in the Philippines, and is a significant step for the development of indigenous women. An organization of indigenous women is a recognition of the important role that women play in the overall struggle of indigenous peoples for self determination and in the defense of ancestral land and resources. The birth of a national network of indigenous women will serve as the major venue for various campaigns and will help in strengthening and increasing the capacities of the indigenous women's organizations throughout the Philippines.

The keynote address, entitled "The Imperative for Indigenous Women to Organize," summarized the general situation confronting Philippine society. The distinct problems of indigenous women in the Philippines as identified by the keynote speaker was substantiated by the various stories and sharing of experiences and problems by the

participants to the workshop. The distinct problems and issues discussed in the workshop can be summarized as follows:

1. Violation of our rights to self-determination, to our ancestral lands, waters and natural resources, and the non-recognition of our natural resource management systems and laws.

The implementation of development programs and projects and the enactment of laws by the government has led to the further expropriation and loss of our ancestral lands and waters either by government, private foreign and local corporations, even by churches and by individuals. The 1987 Philippine Constitution and the enactment of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 have recognized our ancestral land rights as indigenous peoples. However, the implementation of the law until now still leaves much to be desired. In some cases, it is even the government's National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) personnel who broker the use of ancestral lands by private corporations. For one, the law is directly in conflict with state policies and other laws like the Regalian Doctrine of land ownership by the State, the Mining Act of 1995, and most recently, Executive Order No. 270 otherwise known as the National Policy Agenda on Revitalizing Mining in the Philippines, signed by President Gloria Arroyo.

The following cases were shared by the delegates to the workshop:

- The Higaonon and Banwaon peoples of Mindanao have been victims of land grabbing by private corporations that were facilitated by government agencies. Up to the present, there are still existing Timber License Agreements (TLAs) of the

Nasipit Lumber Company in the tri-boundaries of Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon and Agusan del Norte covering more than 100,000 hectares. The programs of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the NCIP on Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) and the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim/Title (CADC/CADT) have passed the ownership of ancestral lands from its communal nature to private individuals and groups.

About 50,000 hectares will be converted to tree plantations (of Shannalynd and Tecland companies) adjacent to Banwaon ancestral territories in Agusan del Sur under the DENR's program placing the area under Caraga's timber corridor. Vast tracts of former Higaonon lands are now pineapple and banana plantations of Del Monte, cattle ranches and sugar cane plantations in Bukidnon. About 2,000 hectares of agricultural lands in 10 barangays (villages) of Talakag, Bukidnon is targeted for palm oil plantation. Negotiations with Higaonon land owners is still ongoing. NCIP personnel are the ones brokering the use of Higaonon lands. Fake datu (community leaders) are even created by politicians and military officials to make it easier for them to get the consent of these unrecognized leaders.

- The CARAGA region in Mindanao - composed of the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte,



Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and the cities of Butuan, Surigao and Bislig - has been designated as the Domestic Food Basket, Agri-Industrial Exporter and Industrial Corridor in southern Philippines by then President Fidel Ramos. This was in connection with the Philippine Medium Term Development Plan. This is also the flagship program of the Caraga Regional Development Plan for 2001-2008.

- Majority of the Tumanduk people (collective term for the indigenous peoples in Panay Island) in the Visayas are living on ancestral lands that the government has awarded to different entities. In 1962, then President Diosdado Macapagal declared 24 barangays in the municipalities of Tapaz and Jamindan in Capiz province covering more than 33,300 hectares of ancestral land as military reservation for the 3rd Infantry Division of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Up to the present, about two war games are conducted in the area annually, disrupting community life of about 12,000 Tumanduks who inhabit the area.

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Since 1994 the Tumanduk families have received and continue to receive eviction notices but they continue to stay on the land. Ancestral lands in the municipalities of Lambunao and Calinog in Iloilo province are declared as forest reservations under the DENR. More than 30 families in 96 hectares in Barangay Laugan, Tapaz in Capiz province, also face eviction by the Central Philippines University owned by the Baptist Church that plans to put up an agricultural extension college in the area.

- In Mindoro province in southern Luzon, 247,914 hectares of the ancestral land of the Mangyan people were declared as the Mangyan Heritage National Park under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) of the DENR, and prevented the Mangyans from living and utilizing the area.

2. The use and entry of inappropriate and destructive development projects and frameworks into indigenous peoples' lands which has led to the destruction of traditional economy, community structures and cultural values, and to the further marginalization of indigenous women or what is referred to as development aggression; also included here is the lack of basic health and reproductive services to women.

The issues of logging, mining, building of dams, imposition of government



programs and projects that result to loss of ancestral lands, destruction of the indigenous economy, culture and socio-political structures are still being experienced by indigenous peoples throughout the country. There has yet been no satisfactory resettlement program in the numerous cases of forced displacements of indigenous peoples from their ancestral territories.

In most cases, opposition to such projects was very strong but the government still succeeded in implementing the projects. The development framework adopted by the government has been the export-oriented, import-driven and debt-dependent framework for economic growth and development, especially in the present globalization era. This framework has brought more poverty than development to the lives of indigenous women.

As seen in the following cases that were shared by the workshop delegates, there is still the rampant implementation of these projects:

- In the Cordillera region in the north, three agricultural development

programs are being implemented which were funded through Official Development Assistance (ODA) from foreign funding institutions. The Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (CECAP) funded by a grant from the European Commission; the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Program (CHARMP) funded by loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and the Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development (CASCADE) funded by a grant from the European Commission. These projects are all aimed at increasing farmers' incomes and raising the level of agricultural production in the region's interior highland areas.

These three projects appealed greatly to the people in the rural areas who have not been provided basic services and support by the government for a long time. Many farmers availed of the agricultural technology packages and the loans provided through the rural financing

schemes. However, after several years of implementation, the programs had impacted negatively on the indigenous peoples who were the project beneficiaries.

Among these are: introduction of high yielding varieties of rice and other crops which decreased the use of traditional rice varieties; rapid shift from traditional subsistence production to cash crop production of vegetables, coffee, fruits and cut flowers among others; increased use of chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides on introduced cash crops that are input-dependent resulting in environmental and health problems; the deterioration of traditional self-help and cooperative practices; and increased trend towards privatization of communal ancestral lands. These programs have imposed inappropriate projects without the necessary consultation and participation of the people.

As a result of the compliance of the government to its obligations under the Agreement of Agriculture

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(AoA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Philippines is now a dumping ground of subsidized imported vegetables from Australia, US, China and Taiwan. This has resulted to huge losses for the local vegetable farmers and traders, especially in the province of Benguet.

In August 2002, hundreds of vegetable dealers and traders at the vegetable trading post in Benguet reported a total loss of P3.5 million (US\$64,000.00) for a period of only three weeks, while some 380 workers such as sorters and packers at the trading post were laid off. It was estimated that local vegetable farmers and traders lost at least P21 million pesos (US\$375,000.00) in earnings within a week as a result of the increased importation of vegetables. Prices of carrots, for instance, dropped to P6.00 (US\$.10) per kilogram from a previous price of P28.00 (\$.50) per kilogram while sales volume fell to 3 tons per day from a previous 10 tons per day.

- The ancestral lands of the Manobos

in north central Mindanao are now mostly utilized by logging companies. More than 10,000 hectares are now owned by Provident Tree Farms, Inc. which has been developed as a softwood plantation in Barangay Talacogon by bribing and hoodwinking the community leaders. Communities vanished from the map as the company prohibited the building of houses and farming within the plantation area including the felling of trees even in those part of their ancestral lands outside the plantation area. Company guards were employed to violently suppress and terrorize the people.

In 2004, President Gloria Arroyo, shortly after taking over as president of the country, issued a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim to the Manobo occupants of Silangan Farms. But the land simply ended back to the possession of the hacienda (plantation) owners for sugarcane plantation despite the CADC because there is no government support to develop the CADC area. Furthermore, the people

had no cash capital needed to cultivate their lands. The Manobos were offered P3,000 (\$55.00) annual land rental for every hectare and will be employed in the hacienda as wage workers. Those who refused to have their parcels of land rented were deprived of electricity and water supply, and were not allowed to work in the canefields. The hacienda made life difficult for the CADC holders forcing them to yield their land to Silangan Farms.

- Ecotourism projects are increasingly being implemented in many indigenous communities. The Dumagats in Nakar, Quezon Province are being forced to evacuate into a resettlement area called Ososoin Makaramba Arutay (OMA) to give way to the development of Nakar into a Pacific Coast City. The resettlement area, far from the river and farming areas, will be converted into a tourism attraction to showcase the lifestyle of the Dumagats. The Tulaog Cave - which is sacred to the Dumagats being the burial cave of their ancestors - is now a tourist spot and they are now prohibited from performing their sacred rituals in the cave.

3. Intensified militarization in indigenous peoples' lands is now the trend leading to sexual violence against women, and increasing the burdens of women.

The increased implementation of so-called development projects such as mining, logging or large-scale plantations on indigenous peoples' ancestral lands has resulted to the peoples' resistance to the entry of such projects on their lands. Such resistance has justified the deployment of military men into these areas; eventually occupying these areas by maintaining permanent

detachments. The militarization of indigenous communities led to the creation of paramilitary and vigilante groups to assist the military in preventing the resistance and opposition by the indigenous peoples. These groups are used by mining and logging companies to clear the way for the implementation of their projects.

Forced recruitment by the military, paramilitary and vigilante groups, and by corporations, of indigenous peoples as personnel has led to the division between and among families, tribes, clans and communities. Militarization has resulted to increased burden on women because they have to cope with the harassment and threat of their families. When the men are forced to leave the village to avoid recruitment into the military or paramilitary units, the care of the family and of the farm is left to the women as well as to face the military forces when they go into the village.

As shared by the participants, military operations have led to countless cases of human rights violations such as forced displacements, physical abuse, torture, arbitrary detention summary executions as well as indiscriminate killing. These are some of their experiences:

- In the provinces of Bukidnon and Davao in southern Mindanao, a paramilitary group called the Alamara was set up by Lito Gawilan, a member of the Manobos, as part of the military operation, "Oplan Alsa Lumad." The Alamara is controlled by Lumads who have large stakes in ancestral domain claims but it is being maintained by the military and used in military operations. In order to secure their stakes and quell the dissenting Lumads, the Lumads in the Alamara claimed themselves to be tribal leaders to facilitate the entry of logging concessions, building of

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dams, commercial plantations and mining activities in Lumad ancestral lands. The Alamara has caused deep divisions among the Lumads and has led to the desecration of their time-honored values.

- The Ata-Manobo women of Davao del Norte were victims of sexual abuse by the dreaded Alamara who hounded them and suspected them of delivering goods to the rebel New Peoples' Army (NPA). The tribal chieftain of Natulinan, Tatanu Igkanugon, has been warned by the Alamara of dire consequences for openly rallying her people against the rise of Alamara. The killing of a pregnant Agusanon woman who was raped, her belly ripped open and the fetus removed, left terror among the Agusanon women. This inhuman act was perpetrated by men identified as the Laplap Gang, a variant of the Alamara group operating in Agusan province.

- In the case of Bai Bibiyaon Ligkayan Bigkay, the woman tribal chieftain of the Ata-Manobo tribe inhabiting the Pantaron Range along the Davao-Bukidnon boundary in southern Mindanao, the elements of the 8th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, with the aid of an Alamara, broke into her house on August 24, 2002. The military accused her family of being supporters of the NPA. One of the soldiers stripped naked her niece in the incident. Soldiers made an alibi that they were just looking for the wounded for treatment.

Bibiyaon, since then, had received threats from the dreaded Alamara Commander Bansilan with a warning that his men were hunting her and will not hesitate to rape and kill her once she is caught. She had been

openly rallying her tribe against the Alamara and led a long history of struggle against various "development" projects being implemented along the Pantaron Ranges. In 1997, she led the fight against three firms whose projects encroached on her tribe's ancestral domain: the Alsons Incorporated's Industrial Forest Management Agreement (IFMA); a 10,000 hectare palm tree plantation; and a 100,000 hectare mining concession of Canadian-owned Plantation Mines, Inc.

- In the Cordillera, there are numerous documented cases committed by the military that has been present in the region since the 1970s. There are three infantry brigades and two special battalions presently deployed in the region consisting of about 2,500 military forces. In addition, there are forces of the Philippine National Police and paramilitary units (CAFGU) and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army. Recent incidents include the torture and killing of Etfew Chadyaas of the Belwang tribe in August 2003 by troops of the 54th Infantry Battalion; a 16-year old female killed inside the military barracks in Mountain Province in July 2003; and a 19-year old deaf-mute, Efren Agsayang killed by police in Benguet province. The killing of the three males was on mere suspicion of being insurgents when in fact, they were on their way to their farms and to hunt in the forest.

- Paramilitary bandit groups such as the Wild Dogs in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur and Impasug-ong in Bukidnon are being used to terrorize Higaonons who are rallying against the implementation of commercial plantations and mines in their area. Higaonons, even those without

formal education, are recruited as regular soldiers of the AFP and able-bodied members of the community are forced to become members of the CAFGU. Undesirable members of the community are given arms by the military and are deployed in counter-insurgency operations. These have sowed disunity among the Higaonons.

• The widespread protests launched by the Tumandok people against the proposed hydroelectric dam in Capiz province and the Julaur River ecotourism project were met with intensified militarization of the

today, they are more challenged and determined to organize and educate a growing number of people in order to increase their capacity in confronting the issues and problems that they face. In addition, they looked into mechanisms on sharing of resources such as education and research materials, lessons in organizing and handling campaigns, and for networking with other organizations and partners. The indigenous women were one in saying during the press conference that they will remain firm and united in the defense of their ancestral lands and resources. They stated that the formation of a national network of indigenous women

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area. In July to December 2001, the AFP's Task Force Panay launched "Oplan Balangai" to "destroy the CPP-NPA's political infrastructure" but obviously was intended to suppress the growing resistance of the Tumandok communities. This was followed by "Oplan Kalinungan" that targeted the communities in Tapaz and Calinog in 2002, and by "Oplan Bantay Laya" in 2003.

Despite these problems faced by indigenous women in the Philippines

is one major step in achieving their goals.

In the words of Ms. Liza Maza, president of the Gabriela Women's Party who shared the national situation of women, "The formation of BAI is not only a victory for indigenous women but for the entire progressive movement of women and indigenous peoples."

It was also agreed at the workshop that BAI will participate in the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference.



2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference

The Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) was established in 1993 during the 1st Asian Indigenous Women's Conference held in Baguio City, Philippines. This was 10 years ago and very few women's organizations were still existing at that time. The AIWN was created to assist in the formation of indigenous women's organizations; to strengthen existing ones; set up national formations for indigenous women; and to facilitate capacity building and exchange of information among the members of the network.

The indigenous women's movement in Asia went through significant developments since the first conference. The most obvious was the increase in the number of indigenous women's organizations. The 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference held on March 4-8, 2004 in Baguio City was attended by a total of 108 indigenous women from 13 countries in Asia. The countries represented were: Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar), China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia,

Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Panel Discussions covered the sharing of inputs from the participants on the situation of indigenous/tribal/ethnic minority women in their countries. In the sharing, it was shown that the indigenous women in Asia generally compose more or less 50 percent of the indigenous population and like other indigenous women in other parts of the world, they have a low socio-economic status compared with the indigenous men or with the non-indigenous women. Despite the diverse cultures and varied customs and practices, the situation of indigenous women is very similar in most Asian countries. They have been discriminated against by a patriarchal society and doubly oppressed by their male counterparts and by mainstream society even in this era of globalization.

The women in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh, for instance, are traditionally regarded as having a lower social standing than their men specially in terms of rights to inheritance, legal and political rights and in decision making. This unequal gender relations has perpetrated the culture in CHT society

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that women are weak and helpless. For many years, they have become victims of violence firstly as women, secondly as minority, thirdly in religion and lastly as women laborers.

Likewise in Nepal, indigenous women who are mostly farmers and workers are the worst victims of racial discrimination from the dominant Hindu culture and from individual men influenced by Hindu male-dominated values and cultural practices. As an exception, the indigenous women in Sabah, Malaysia play an important role in community governance where women are included in the Council of Elders. The indigenous Kadazandusun, Rungus and Semai women of Sabah participate in decision-making as priestesses, healers and ritual specialists. However, like in many countries, these traditional customs and practices are slowly disappearing due to the influence of state policies, education, media and religion.

Traditionally, majority of the indigenous peoples in Asia are farmers and foresters where most of the socio-economic and cultural practices revolve around farming and natural resource management and utilization. The indigenous economic system is basically subsistent and self-reliant in nature. This means that each family produces to for its own needs with a little surplus produce that is sold in the market. Labor is usually provided by family members. Men and women perform different tasks in farming and other livelihood activities.

The traditional division of labor has allocated the tasks requiring physical strength to men, and work that requires sustained effort and endurance has been assigned to women. This division is reinforced by traditional customs and beliefs. Generally, it is the indigenous women who do the bulk of the work in farming, like land preparation, planting,

weeding and harvesting aside from performing domestic tasks such as housework and child-bearing and rearing. Men, on the other hand, perform the heavy task of clearing the land in new farm areas. Indigenous women are involved on a daily basis in forest-related activities and possess a wealth of knowledge related to preservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Many indigenous women who work as wage workers experience wage discrimination.

The stark realities in the situation of stark realities in the situation of the indigenous women in Asia are consistently seen in all the country reports. There are countless stories of indigenous women in the region who have been killed and raped by military and paramilitary forces, in countries like Bangladesh, Philippines, India, Burma, Nepal, among others. Up to now, these indigenous women are scared to even come out and tell their stories because of serious threats by the perpetrators who remain scot-free.

Since 9/11 many governments have launched series of military operations in indigenous territories under the guise of containing terrorism and controlling drug trafficking. In Thailand, about 2,000 indigenous men have been arrested and some killed in the past nine months on mere suspicion as drug pushers. These arrests and killings have left the care of the household to the women. Some indigenous women's organizations are not even allowed to exist anymore. It is also alarming to note the increasing number of indigenous women who have become victims of illegal sex trafficking. Although studies on this are few, there are some cases which need to be studied further.

In Mongolia, crimes of trafficking of indigenous women has increased in

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biopiracy of indigenous peoples' biogenetic resources and traditional knowledge. Large dams are still being built in spite of the serious impacts of these on the lives, livelihoods, cultures and spiritual existence of indigenous peoples.

recent years. Today, every Mongolian has witnessed sensational stories in newspapers with pictures of young women trafficked to foreign countries for sexual exploitation. But they rarely see successful court cases where prosecution of traffickers and protection of the victims take place. There is as yet no comprehensive research on this issue, but from the reports, it seems there are increasing cases of indigenous women as victims of illegal sex trafficking and this may be an issue that should be looked into.

The overall impact of resettlement and loss of livelihood resources has been much more negative for indigenous women. They have to find alternative means and sources of livelihood. It has become more difficult for them to do their traditional activities like making handicrafts and food preparation. Their burden of work has doubled as they seek new livelihood opportunities and continue to be responsible for housework, child bearing and rearing. Indigenous women are no longer self-reliant traditional producers of food and are forced to accept wage employment to supply their basic needs.

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Globalization has come to indigenous territories in the form of dam construction and other energy projects, commercial plantations, logging and mining industries among other things. In most of the country reports, there are increasing cases of indigenous peoples and their communities which have been displaced from their ancestral lands; and who are now suffering from adverse ecological and social impacts of so-called development projects.

The changes in indigenous territories brought about by globalization such as the market economy, cultural exchange and more access to information, have also brought changes to indigenous culture. With the current focus on the economy or in earning a living, some of the indigenous peoples' traditions and cultural practices are gradually being lost while the younger generation rarely use their dialect and are gradually moving away from their traditions.

The most notorious among these are the extractive industries (oil, gas and mineral), large hydro-electric dams, oil palm plantations, pulp and paper industries, monocrop agricultural plantations, national parks and protected areas, and increasingly,

The response and coping mechanisms of indigenous women to the various problems and issues that confront them vary among the Asian countries. These range from becoming active participants to the struggles of indigenous peoples

alongside the men as part of strong indigenous women organizations (Philippines, India and in Malaysia) to setting up new organizations for indigenous women (Bangladesh and Indonesia) or becoming members of broad organizations with some awareness-raising education on indigenous women's issues (Thailand and Burma).

The main constraints facing the indigenous women's movement in Asia are the general lack of awareness and consciousness, not to mention the encouragement to get women involved in decision-making and leadership. The lack of capacity especially among the rural indigenous women to get involved in matters beyond the village or community level is also one factor. These constraints are reinforced by the reality that most women are over-burdened with household and child-rearing tasks, farm work and wage employment, if any. Thus, many indigenous women face personal and family-related constraints that prevent them from actively participating in the women's movement, much less initiate one, including NGOs and programs directed at building the capacity of indigenous women. In some communities, customary practices and beliefs make it difficult for women to be

active outside their homes, while in some areas, husbands or family elders tend to discourage their involvement, preferring them to concentrate on household matters. In addition, organizing activities for the community and for women require financial and other resources and women are usually disadvantaged in this area.

With this situation, the five panel discussions in the conference covered the inputs on various international bodies and instruments and how these can be used to assist women to cope with the problems that they face. The fifth panel briefly shared the existing regional and international networks like the South Asia Indigenous Women's Forum, the Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact and the International Alliance of Indigenous Peoples in the Tropical Forests.

In the international policy advocacy work, the different UN bodies at different levels, be it local, national or international, can be a venue to raise environmental issues, bring out problems, and to gain support in our lobby work. It was made clear in the discussions that as indigenous peoples, one cannot talk of sustainable development without talking about self-determination. Some of the areas where indigenous peoples have actively

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participated in international forums are:

- on the issues of whether water rights are recognized and whether indigenous peoples participate in policies on water;
- on Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) on dams and other development projects; and
- on the Extractive Industries Review (EIR) of the World Bank, such as on the World Bank's participation in investments of mining companies and in mining laws of different countries.

It was pointed out and agreed upon by the participants during the discussions that in using UN bodies and instruments, indigenous women should be aware that many of the governments are not even aware of these policies. But as indigenous peoples, they can assert these with their governments and donor-states who give funds to support development projects in their countries. Indigenous women should also look into ways on how to translate these instruments into national policies, and on how to use these at the community level.

The participation of women must be ensured in international and national conferences, although from past experiences, it was difficult to insist on having half of participants to be women. It was also made clear that their rights as indigenous peoples are not based on any instrument; it must be inherent although these instruments may be able to assist indigenous women in the assertion of their rights as indigenous peoples and as women.

The participants to the Conference discussed five (5) workshop topics on the following:

Workshop 1. Defense of Ancestral Lands and Resources

Workshop 2. Customary Laws and Practices which violate/promote indigenous women's rights

Workshop 3. Effects of Militarization on indigenous women

Workshop 4. Reproductive Rights and Violence Against Women

Workshop 5. Discrimination and to increase the role of indigenous women in Decision-making processes

In the first workshop on the defense of ancestral lands and resources, the participants shared the specific situation of ancestral lands and resources in their areas. Like the indigenous Ibans of Malaysia, it is usually the men who play a major role in defense of ancestral lands such as negotiating with the government and private corporations on development projects that are brought to their territories. The Iban indigenous women believe that women must also participate and know how to defend their rights to create a bigger voice for the community.

Lijiang province in China has become a hot spot for tourism. Most of the indigenous peoples who live in the villages sold their lands for tourism purposes since it seemed that their main consideration was to get money for them to be able to buy goods. The policy of the state on lands is that these belong to the tiller of the land and these can be sold by them as well. Social problems arose like increased playing of mahjong by the women in the villages due to the loss of their lands since they no longer have sources of livelihood.

The same situation is true in Taiwan as shared by one participant where her village became a tourist spot due to their hot springs. Many villagers sold their ancestral lands to construct hotels and resorts. The people now earn their living

as workers in the hotels and other tourism establishments, while others have migrated to the city to look for work. The people who chose to stay in the villages live mainly for tourism where they maintain their clothes, dances and their culture as showcases for tourists. There are only a few indigenous people left in Taiwan and the main program of the government is for their assimilation to the mainstream society. There are many indigenous organizations but they cannot work closely together, hence the issues have not been addressed effectively.

In the Philippines, an Aeta woman briefly shared their situation which is very similar to those in other areas in Asia. They have been staying on their ancestors' land

non-recognition has led to the increased loss of ancestral lands to give way to development projects of the state. The impact of this problem include the degradation of the environment, increased poverty due to loss of livelihood and dependence on the market economy, and disempowerment of IPs in state structures and policies.

Specifically, the impact on indigenous women include loss of self-reliance in food production, loss of knowledge on resource management and biodiversity, increased sexual harassment and abuse as workers and in the home, and bearing the greater burden of deepening poverty. The recommended actions to address these issues are education and awareness raising, research and

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and have protected these lands and the resources for a long time but the government has claimed these to be used for development projects like dams and national parks.

The core problem identified by the group on the defense of ancestral lands and resources is the non-recognition of indigenous peoples' rights by the state, investors and private corporations. This

organizing, campaign and advocacy work, networking through dialogues, petitions and linkage building, legal remedies, and armed struggle.

There are some identified strengths and weaknesses in the indigenous women's movement. Some of the strengths are the presence of strong organizations of indigenous women and sustained movements like in the Philippines and

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Indonesia, and the increasing participation of women in indigenous peoples' struggles. On the other hand, the weaknesses include the lack of awareness of women on their rights, and the presence of many organizations who cannot work closely with one another, diffusing and making their efforts ineffective.

The second workshop covered the discussion on customary laws and practices which violate/promote indigenous women's rights. The core areas of the discussion on customary laws were on resource management, inheritance, arranged marriages and violence against women.

women in land ownership, "mixlineal" inheritance, indirect inheritance to matrilineal inheritance. However, these practices are gradually being lost and at present, increasingly, each person takes care of himself. More women are also becoming landless.

Discussions on bride price and arranged marriages were also tackled, due to the prevalence of these practices especially in South Asian countries. In Nagaland, India, the practice of giving dowry is still present and the women have to spend and make all the clothes for the wedding. In Nepal, the Tamang people have the traditional practice of a woman marrying all the brothers in one family - from the



On resource management, most of the members shared the common experiences where the women play an important role in the management of resources, using tested customary laws and practices. However, this role is not recognized in their communities. The participants coming from different cultures shared varied practices on inheritance of land. The inheritance practices range from the exclusion of

eldest to the youngest – causing guilt and embarrassment by women especially to outsiders. Some forced marriages turn women into bonded labor, and in arranged marriages, there are varying degrees of consent on the part of the daughters.

In cases of violence against women (VAW), the old practice that has changed now was the traditional way of dealing with VAW which was more of a

community concern. However, in recent times, VAW has become more of a private matter confined to the household and there is less intervention from other people outside the family.

From the shared experiences on customary laws and practices, the group recommended the documentation of customary laws and practices that promoted and violated women's rights. There is a need to find a balance between the two with the goal to gradually eliminate or revise the oppressive laws and practices and to strengthen and revive those that promote women's rights. From the discussions at the plenary, it was reiterated that there is a need to recognize the customary laws under specific contexts, and that customary laws and practices are linked to their identity as a people. In addition, traditional institutions must be revitalized so there will be mechanisms to effectively change or strengthen customary laws.

The third workshop group tackled the effects of militarization on indigenous women and peace-building and conflict resolution efforts done by indigenous peoples. Militarization, as defined by the group, is perpetrated by state forces such as the military, police, paramilitary groups and by the private armies and vigilante groups of private companies that are endorsed by state forces.

On the other hand, peace building efforts are in the framework of indigenous peoples'/women's assertion of their right to self-determination which include the consideration and recognition of the social context they are in; and the actions or forms of struggles that they undertake to build or contribute to peace processes within their communities.

These are not only limited to dialogues, negotiations, lobbying and metalegal

actions but may include higher forms like armed struggle and even the call for independence and assertion of sovereignty.

In the reports shared by the members, in all the indigenous communities represented, they have experienced state-sponsored violence that has caused the disintegration of the community. Rape is always used as a weapon of war by the military, police and paramilitary forces to humiliate and attack entire communities. Specific reports shared include the Bodo women of Assam, India where 22 members of the military gang raped 10 Bodo women in December 1997 while two Bodo women who spoke out on the issue were killed by the military.

Some indigenous women in Central Luzon and the Cordillera in the Philippines were raped by the military but they were scared to file cases against the soldiers for fear of repercussions. Children have also become victims, like in Burma, where young boys are abducted and forced to become child soldiers. In the Philippines, women and children are used by soldiers to enter communities and when they have relationships with the women and sire children, are later abandoned when they are assigned to other areas. Economic and social activities are disrupted such as when women are prevented from going to their gardens and to the forests like in Burma, or even to bring their products to the market like the Jumma women of Bangladesh. The Jumma women are also forced to hide their identities for fear of sexual violence from the military.

Forced migration to the cities and even to other countries have increased and this has led to the disintegration of indigenous culture. Indigenous women are not spared and they become political prisoners like in Burma. In Nepal, even if

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women are involved in armed struggles like in the Maoist movement, they are most often excluded from formal peace negotiations with the government. The government and the military often provoke fighting among and between indigenous groups to “divide and rule” them. The military has also facilitated the migration of non-indigenous peoples to indigenous territories (Bangladesh) which is a form of assimilation of indigenous peoples and has contributed to the disintegration of the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

A new phenomenon that has aggravated state militarization is the war on terror and state policies such as national anti-terrorism laws or bills. In the Philippines, the proposed Anti-Terror Bill labels the indigenous peoples/women's organizations asserting their right to self-determination as terrorists, while joint military exercises of the United States and the Philippine military forces are done within indigenous territories, e.g., in Central Luzon, which has displaced indigenous Aeta communities. In Nagaland, India, the National Security Act has led to cases of disappearance and killings for mere suspicion of being involved in insurgency. The military rule in Burma has resulted to massive human rights violations especially on women and children.

The workshop members also discussed the effect of religious fundamentalism on indigenous women. In Bangladesh, Jumma women are abducted and forced to marry non-Jumma men to facilitate their integration to the mainstream Islamic Bangladeshi society. In the Philippines, traditional cultural materials such as beads, rice gods, gongs and others used in indigenous rituals are destroyed by Christian fundamentalist groups as these materials are regarded as instruments of evil.

The role of women in peace accords and conflict resolution through traditional means have not been recognized. In Nepal, they have formed the Nepalese Women for Peace and the Indigenous Coordination Committee for Peace Talks to pave the way for indigenous women's participation in peace talks between the government and the Maoist movement.

The proposed actions and responses to this issue include education and training on human rights and capacity building of indigenous women on various issues, documentation of case studies and tribunals, active intervention through dialogues and lobby with government, and lastly, organizing to establish responsive indigenous women's organizations for peace negotiations or dialogues and as self-help groups. The group also strongly recommended the formation of an indigenous women's committee for conflict resolution and peace building. Indigenous women are active participants in indigenous peoples' struggles; they are not victims but survivors and are serious participants to peace building and peace efforts that uphold their right to self-determination.

The fourth group discussed the reproductive rights including violence against women and sex trafficking of indigenous women. As shared by the members, common to all the countries is the fact that reproductive rights do not exist in most indigenous communities. Indigenous women do not have a say in the number of children they want for their family. Indigenous culture most often has preference for male children, that in instances where the wife bears daughters only, she is pressured to give births until a son is born; or the husband takes advantage of the situation and divorces his wife or takes another wife. Indigenous women gain more respect from the community by giving birth to two or more male

children. Divorce is recognized in all the countries except in the Philippines, but in indigenous communities, divorce is allowed on valid grounds such as being childless. However, this is not recognized by the state.

Changes in the economic system in indigenous territories such as the intensification of cash crop production and the loss of self-reliant economies have greatly affected the reproductive health of indigenous women. The state is also not capable of addressing issues on reproductive health in most of the countries because more often than not, national health budgets are very small and does not even reach the indigenous communities in the interior or less accessible areas of the country.

As related by the members of the group, violence against indigenous women is increasing due to poverty and militarization. Domestic and physical violence is increasing among indigenous women as more men lose their livelihood and families are exposed to economic uncertainty. The increasing outmigration of indigenous women to the urban areas to look for livelihood opportunities also detaches them from the support system

of the community and the family in cases of violence against women like wife battering.

Poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness, and conflict in indigenous communities are forcing more and more indigenous women to migrate to urban centers, other provinces and overseas as workers in factories, construction industry and even in the sex trade. Sex trafficking is increasing day by day. In Nepal, for example, where many indigenous women are easily lured by "brokers," they are brought to Bombay, Malaysia and even to the Arab countries in the Middle East. Many international donor agencies give funds to prevent and prosecute trafficking but this is rarely implemented in indigenous communities in the highlands and interior areas which are not accessible as compared to the lowlands.

The group recommended that a strong network must be developed to address the issue on trafficking of indigenous women. Documentation of sex trafficking incidents and experiences must also be done to serve as basis for advocacy on this issue. There is a need to lobby international bodies and also

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governments to raise the issue of sex trafficking and violence against women. In the plenary discussion, an additional point was raised on the traditional knowledge held by indigenous women on healing and traditional medicine. The recommendation was that the government should recognize and promote these forms of alternative healing practices. This was seen as a significant issue because in some Asian countries like Nepal, indigenous women who practice traditional healing and use traditional medicine are branded and projected in the media as “witches” or engaged in witchcraft. It was also shared that “witch accusation” of women healers is not only true in Asia but also in other parts of the world. For example, in South Africa a group of women healers were accused of being witches and were driven out of the community by their own people and thrown into the forest.

With regards to the rights of women, it is not only a problem of lack of awareness and education but in some Asian countries, it is the lack of rights of indigenous women. Women's rights have been discussed by the other workshop groups and it was pointed out that there is a need for indigenous women to assess whether or not the government machineries and mechanisms on women's rights in their countries are effectively being implemented. Most governments make very good reports to the Commission on the Status of Women and on the Commission on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), but there is a need to look at the actual implementation in countries.

The fifth workshop group covered the topic on discrimination and how to increase the role of indigenous women in decision-making processes. The extent and forms of discrimination were gathered from the experiences shared

by the members where in all the countries represented, national and local leadership are dominated by men. This practice is even reinforced by the present government systems. In Orang Asli society, for instance, the government negotiates only with men in the community, never with women. In decision-making, women are not given any role and men even look down on their capacity. This is reinforced when indigenous women hardly get any chance for education like in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Indigenous women in Thailand have no chance at higher education if they do not adopt Thai citizenship and learn the language. The school curriculum and even indigenous culture in almost all countries further perpetuates male domination. A woman in Peninsular Malaysia and in Nepal who stays in the village and works at home is more respected by the indigenous community than a woman with higher education who works outside the home. Even among indigenous peoples' organizations, men are almost always the ones attending international conferences. Most governments in Asia do not recognize the existence of many indigenous groups like in Nepal where only one indigenous group is recognized by the government out of the more than 100 indigenous groups.

The success story of the Toro people of Indonesia in asserting their access to a national park was also shared. The problem of the Toro people in 1993 was their lack of access to a national park established in 1970. In 1993, the Toro people started their struggle to regain access by doing documentation, mapping of the area, exploring indigenous knowledge, discussions and lobbying. They learned from the elders about the working zones in the national park and based on the information from

the elders, they made a map of the area based on customary law and traditional use. They used the documentation and the map as basis to lobby the government. They finally got the Adat Toro law that gave them access to the national park in 2000. The Toro women played a key role by initiating discussion groups beginning 1995 among the Toro people involved in the struggle. In the process, the movement grew stronger.

The National Park Management acknowledged the Adat Toro Law. After the Adat was granted, the women attended a workshop in 2001 facilitated by an NGO which led to the formation of their own organization. They gained the recognition of the community and the government. With this recognition, the Toro women are now in the structure of decision making of the government body for the Adat Toro, and also a member of the working committee of Toro land for the next three years. The group has expanded their work to five villages by sharing their experience and encouraging other women to do the same.

This story and other success stories and good practices where women's role have been recognized by men and the community must be shared and heard by other women to encourage them to change their situation.

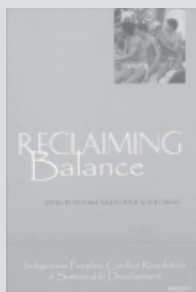
The group's recommendations are to have a more comprehensive documentation of women discrimination and disseminate this to national and international community. Success stories of the struggle of women must also be shared to a broader audience; lobby for more funds for women participation in decision making must be undertaken; women groups at the local and national levels must be organized; and education and training programs for indigenous women on leadership and other skills implemented.

Indigenous women need to have a resolution to document all cases of discrimination, be it racial, religion-, and gender-based, among others, and present these to governments and to appropriate international bodies.

The proposed structure and program of the AIWN was discussed and finalized by the countries grouped according to region. Each of the countries submitted the names of the focal persons for their country which will form the coordinating body of the network. The conference declaration was also finalized and named the "Baguio Declaration." This declaration contains the summary of the situation, issues, responses, recommendations and resolutions of Asian indigenous women who attended the second Asian indigenous women's conference.

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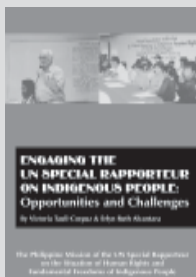




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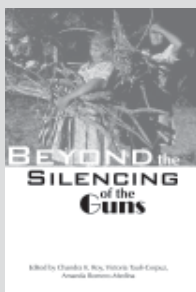
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