



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



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U.N. Reps Support PHL Govt in Promoting Indigenous Peoples Rights



(Photo credits: Joss Leaño; Poster from NCIP)

06 August 2020, Los Angeles – As part of the overall government effort to empower Filipino indigenous communities, the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles joined in the commemoration of International Day of IPs on 05 August 2020 by way of a virtual web forum.

The forum, organized by the Philippines’ National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) with the theme “*Voices from the Ancestral Domains: Fulfilling Rights, Addressing Challenges*,” was attended by a diverse representation of Filipino IP communities, including Agta Manobos, Bagobos, Yakan, Badjao, Samal Bangingis and Subanens, just to name a few.

In his opening remarks, Undersecretary Severo Catura, Head of the Philippines’ Presidential Human Rights Committee, invited those present to listen to raw and honest stories that “define the narrative of a people who make our country proud as bearers of culture and our highest regard.”



UN Special Rapporteur Francisco Cali Tzay emphasized the importance of taking heed of the lessons from the communities’ forebears in preserving their land and their culture. He added that IPs with no territory cease to be a community. (Photo left)

According to NCIP Chairperson, Datu Allen A. Capuyan, the Philippines adheres to international and legal instruments that protect the rights of the country's 132 IP groups spread in seven regions.

In pursuit of implementing these laws, NCIP took the lead in providing a series of opportunities for select IP leaders to share their plight and narratives abroad in 2019, particularly during the 42nd session on the UN Human Rights Council and the 8th Forum on Business and Human Rights both held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Human Rights Commissioner Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana underscored that, “the Commission on Human Rights is mandated to make people aware of their rights and guide the government and society towards actions that respect the rights of all, particularly those who cannot defend themselves namely, the disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable.” *(Photos above right)*



Also present as a reactor in the forum was the UN Resident Coordinator to the Philippines, Mr. Gustavo Gonzales, who likewise underscored the importance of ensuring that the rights of IPs are protected. *(Photo left)*

Representing the Consulate General were Consul Rea G. Oreta and Information Officer Mary Grace “Joss” Leaño. The Consulate General also

made the forum available to its 10,000 followers via a livestream of the event on its official Facebook page.

The Philippine Government has over 14 million IPs spread throughout the country with 63% living in southern Philippines. In 1987, the country passed a landmark legislation that aims to protect the rights of its indigenous communities to their ancestral domain and to self-governance, social justice and human rights. The Philippines is the only country in Asia that has a law on indigenous peoples. END.