

TERMINAL REPORT
3rd International Conference on Decentralization
EDSA Shangri-La, Manila, Philippines
October 7 – 9, 2003

Background

The 1st International Conference on Decentralization with the theme “Serving the Public Interest Through Decentralization: Models and Approaches,” was conducted in January 1996 at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel. It was organized then by the Local Government Academy, DILG in close collaboration with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). It brought together close to 150 participants from 20 different countries.

On July 25-27, 2002, the 2nd International Conference on Decentralization (2nd ICD) was held in the same venue. Its theme was “Federalism: The Future of Decentralizing States?” It brought together close to 200 participants from 22 countries. This time, it was organized by the Center for Local and Regional Governance of the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines (CLRG, NCPAG, UP) Diliman, in collaboration with UNDP Philippines, the Forum of Federations, the German Foundation for International Development, Institute of Public Administration in Canada, Local Government Academy, Office of Senator Pimentel, PARAGON Regional Governance Program for Asia, US Embassy Manila, World Bank Institute, and the Local Government Academy, DILG. It is here that the Asian Resource Center for Decentralization (ARCD), based at CLRG, NCPAG, UP, was launched.

The 3rd International Conference on Decentralization (3rd ICD), with the theme “Decentralization and Good Urban Governance Contributing Towards the Attainment of Millennium Development Goals,” was conducted last October 7-9, 2003. This time the organizers of the 1st and the 2nd ICD joined forces in organizing the event. The Center for Local and Regional Governance of NCPAG, UP through its Asian Resource Center for Decentralization (ARCD), worked with the LGA, DILG in collaboration with a number of development-oriented organizations to make the Conference a success.

Objectives

The general aim of the 3rd International Conference on Decentralization is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences among practitioners, stakeholders and scholars who are interested in good urban governance (GUG).

Specifically, the conference aimed to (1) review the state of urban governance in the world, in general, and in selected countries, in particular; (2) serve as a forum to highlight and discuss best practices in urban governance that may inspire and serve as models to other urban and urbanizing communities; (3) provide the venue for discussing results of researches that are relevant to good urban governance in different countries from which participants can learn significant lessons; and (5) build a network of good urban governance practitioners, advocates and stakeholders who will continue to discuss and work together regarding decentralization and good urban governance.

Aside from the interesting and relevant programme of the 3rd ICD and the learning and networking opportunities it provided to its participants, it also featured other add-ons like the daily bulletin called “3rd ICD Review” that highlights the daily Conference proceedings. The last issue of the 3rd ICD Review was released during the Closing Program of the Conference.

Participants

A total of 277 registered participants representing 21 countries (including the Philippines) attended the Conference. Below is a profile of the participants, according to country represented.

Country	Delegates	
	Number	%
1. Australia	4	1.4
2. Bangladesh	3	1.1
3. Canada	19	6.8
4. Germany	1	.4
5. Indonesia	1	.4
6. Japan	3	1.1
7. Korea	1	.4
8. Lithuania	1	.4
9. Malaysia	2	.7
10. Namibia	1	.4
11. Nepal	3	1.1
12. Norway	1	.4
13. Pakistan	2	.7
14. Philippines	224	80.9

15. Slovak Republic	1	.4
16. Spain	1	.4
17. Sri Lanka	2	.7
18. Switzerland	1	.4
19. Thailand	4	1.4
20. Turkey	1	.4
21. USA	1	.4
Totals	277	100%

Partner Organizations

The Conference brought together many different institutions.

CLRG's ARCD and LGA collaborated with a number of organizations to make sure that the Conference would be a success. Below is an alphabetical list of the partner institutions involved.

- Australian Agency for International Development through the Philippines-Australia Governance Facility
- Canadian International Development Agency through four of its affiliate agencies: Canadian Urban Institute, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Institute of Public Administration of Canada, and the Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Programme
- City of Makati and the University of Makati
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- League of Cities of the Philippines
- Network of Local Government Training and Research Institutes in Asia and the Pacific (LOGOTRI)
- Metro Manila Development Authority
- Office of Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr.
- UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Un Human Settlements Programme (HABITAT)
- Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines
- United Nations Development Programme - Philippines
- World Bank Institute
- Other partners
 - Philippine Urban Forum, Department of Foreign Affairs, US Embassy Manila, German Technical Cooperation, E-Works, Bell Telecommunication Philippines, Inc.

Exhibitors

Exhibit booths were also a feature of the Conference. Partner organizations and other decentralization-focused organizations were encouraged to take advantage of the presence of both local and international participants and guests to promote their activities and to distribute materials for their advocacy and information dissemination. However, due to limited space, only seven agencies were accommodated. Below is an alphabetical list of the exhibitors, namely:

- Canadian Urban Institute
- CLRG, NCPAG, UP Diliman
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Local Government Academy
- LOGOTRI
- Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Program
- UNDP

Evaluation and Assessment of the Conference

Based on fifty-two participants who answered and submitted the feedback questionnaires distributed, in general, the respondents were very satisfied with the content and the conduct of the Conference.

The objective of the Conference is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences among practitioners, stakeholders and scholars who are interested in good urban governance (GUG). The participants assessed that the objective was satisfactorily met. They also indicated that the topics discussed contributed substantively to their knowledge and better understanding of GUG-related issues.

With regard to the venue and accommodation, majority of the participants gave high ratings to the hotel rooms, function rooms and meals.

As to the management of the Conference, the participants expressed satisfaction with the schedule which, according to them, was just right, i.e., not too tight nor lax. They gave relatively high ratings for the speakers, moderators, facilitators and rapporteurs. The participants were highly satisfied with the performance of the Conference staff.

Below are the details of the Evaluation.

The participants rated three aspects of the Conference (i.e., content, venue and accommodation, and management of the Conference) using a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest.

Table 1 shows half (50%) of the respondents indicated that the Conference

objectives were satisfactorily met, while 42% said they were very satisfied with how the objectives were achieved.

Of the total respondents, 50% claimed to have been satisfied with the substantive contribution of the Conference to their knowledge. Another 44% rated the contribution as very satisfactory (Table 1).

In terms of the methodology used, 46% gave a satisfactory rating, 29% noted it was very satisfactory, and another 17% remained neutral with their assessment (Table 1).

About 54% of the respondents were very satisfied with the Conference Kit, whereas 40% expressed neutrality regarding this matter (Table 1).

Table 1. Topics Covered

1.1 Attainment of Objectives	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	22	42%
4 – Satisfactory	26	50%
3 – Neutral	4	8%
2 – Unsatisfactory		
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
Totals	52	100%
1.2 Substantive Contribution to Knowledge	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	23	44%
4 – Satisfactory	26	50%
3 – Neutral	1	2%
2 – Unsatisfactory	1	2%
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	1	2%
Totals	52	100%
1.3 Methodology	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	15	29%
4 – Satisfactory	24	46%
3 – Neutral	9	17%
2 – Unsatisfactory	2	4%
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	2	4%
Totals	52	100%
1.4 Conference Kit / Materials	# of respondents	%

5 – Very Satisfactory	28	54%
4 – Satisfactory	21	40%
3 – Neutral	3	6%
2 – Unsatisfactory		
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
Totals	52	100%

With regard to the venue and accommodation, almost half (46%) of the respondents rated the hotel rooms as highly satisfactory. About 42% gave no answer to this particular inquiry, which may be interpreted as those who were not billeted in the hotel during the Conference (Table 2).

Sixty-five percent (65%) were very satisfied with the function rooms. Twenty-three percent found them satisfactory, whereas 10% gave no answer (Table 2).

A very large majority (71%) rated the meals as very satisfactory, and approximately 19% answered satisfactory (Table 2).

Table 2. Venue and Accommodations

2.1 Bedrooms	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	24	46%
4 – Satisfactory	1	2%
3 – Neutral	4	8%
2 – Unsatisfactory	1	2%
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	22	42%
Totals	52	100%
2.2 Function Rooms	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	34	65%
4 – Satisfactory	12	23%
3 – Neutral	1	2%
2 – Unsatisfactory		
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	5	10%
Totals	52	100%
2.3 Meals	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	37	71%
4 – Satisfactory	10	19%
3 – Neutral	4	8%
2 – Unsatisfactory		
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	1	2%
Totals	52	100%

We can deduce from Table 3 that 48% of the respondents rated the Conference schedule as satisfactory, 42% considered it very satisfactory, while 2% gave an unsatisfactory rating.

Fifty percent of the respondents rated the resource persons as very satisfactory, 33% expressed belief they were satisfactory, while 4% found them unsatisfactory (Table 3).

Forty-eight percent rated the performance of the moderators, facilitators and rapporteurs as satisfactory. Those who found them very satisfactory represented 46% of the total respondents, while 6% gave a neutral rating (Table 3).

Table 3. Seminar Management

3.1 Schedule	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	22	42%
4 – Satisfactory	25	48%
3 – Neutral	3	6%
2 – Unsatisfactory	1	2%
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
No Answer	1	2%
Totals	52	100%
3.2 Resource Persons	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	26	50%
4 – Satisfactory	17	33%
3 – Neutral	7	13%
2 – Unsatisfactory	2	4%
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
Totals	52	100%
3.3 Moderators / Facilitators / Rapporteurs	# of respondents	%
5 – Very Satisfactory	24	46%
4 – Satisfactory	25	48%
3 – Neutral	3	6%
2 – Unsatisfactory		
1 – Very Unsatisfactory		
Totals	52	100%

The last item of the evaluation was left for other comments and suggestions of the respondents. The participants wrote:

Reading Materials

- Maybe next time, the materials can be distributed to participants in diskettes instead of print.

Schedule

- Time element must be extended for resource persons to elaborate on their topics.
- Speakers should be allocated more than 15 minutes for their presentation.
- There should be more than two sessions at a time.
- Time for the open forum should have been given more emphasis.

Field Visits

- There should be more time allotted for the field visits.
- Field visits were not structured in a way that would have allowed us to really understand what “best practices” are being developed.

Resource persons

- Quality of resource persons and presentations was uneven and some presentations were not relevant to the topic of the session.

Venue

- Seminars of this kind should also be held where the best practices are found. For conferences abroad, the DILG should send participants from all regions to serve as insights in their assigned task as catalysts.

Conference Organizers

- CLRG deserves highest commendation for their excellent work and contribution to the Conference.
- The commitment and capability of the support staff are very impressive.

Content

- Definition and description of terms must be provided to participants with limited knowledge on the topic of urban governance.
- The Conference not only awakened our awareness of our system’s shortcomings but also made us appreciate the efforts exerted nationally and locally for the improvement of local governance.
- Some of the important issues and topics are not attended to. Workshop group members should be recommended on the basis of their background.

Other remarks

- Very interesting and well-attended Conference
- Looking forward to the next International Conference on Decentralization!
- similar activities be conducted in the future.
- Disseminate the best practices of local governance worldwide.
- Very informative and impressive!
- The whole conference was very productive and well-organized.
- The conference provided thorough and lively interaction with most of the participants.
- Mobile phones should not be allowed in the Conference halls / rooms.
- Less conference registration fee.
- Entire Sangguniang Bayan should be invited.
- Attendance of the participants must be monitored for their own benefit.

Next Steps

CLRG, with the assistance of the German Technical Cooperation and the Office of Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. would soon be publishing the Conference Proceedings, together with the Conference Papers. The 3rd ICD publication is targeted to be out by January 2004.

The Asian Resource Center for Decentralization is in the process of uploading most of the Conference papers and other materials like the 3rd ICD Review in its website at www.decentralization.ws. Its database is currently being enlarged.