

2010 PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT



United Nations Development Programme

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Project Title:	Strengthening Human Rights Infrastructure in the Philippines; GO-NGO Forum on the CERD
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Total Award Amount:	USD12,500.00
Responsible Partner:	Indigenous Peoples Rights Monitor and Cordillera Peoples' Alliance
Implementing Partner	Commission on Human Rights

Section 1. Project Overview/ Background

The GO-NGO Forum on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the development of a website as a center for information on the major international human rights instruments as relating to indigenous peoples in the Philippines, is within the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines' (CHRP) project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), specifically referred to as ***Strengthening Human Rights Infrastructure in the Philippines***. The project's efforts have been directed on: (1) strengthening the coordination, institutional accountabilities and compliance with human rights conventions; (2) increasing public awareness and deepen the understanding on human rights especially among the poor and disadvantaged; and (3) strengthening human rights infrastructure at the local government and community levels.

This specific project was spearheaded by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Monitor (IPRM) in partnership with the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) and on behalf of the consortium of non-government organizations which have been working for the submission of a Shadow Report to the CERD. Aside from IPRM, the consortium is composed of the Alternative Law Groups, Inc. (ALG), Anthropology Watch (Anthrowatch), Cordillera Indigenous Peoples Legal Center-Dinteg (Dinteg), CPA, EED Philippine Partners' Task Force for Indigenous Peoples' Rights (EEDTFIP), Indigenous Peoples Links (PIPLinks), Irish Centre for Human Rights (ICHR), Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP)/National Federation of Indigenous Peoples Organizations in the Philippines, Koalisyon ng Katutubong Samahan ng Pilipinas (KASAPI)/National Coalition of Indigenous Organizations in the Philippines, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center-Kasama sa Kalikasan/Friends of the Earth Philippines (LRC-KsK/FOE Phils), Philippines Association for Intercultural Development Inc (PAFID), Tebtebba Foundation, Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education (Tebtebba), Tanggapang Panligal ng Katutubong Pilipino (PANLIPI)/Legal Assistance Center for Indigenous Filipinos. The consortium is supported by the Task Force Canatuan groups (Apo Manglang Glupa' Pusaka, Gukom, PBS, DCMI, Legal Rights Center, Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), PMP, PIPLinks, Tebtebba, also including Irish Centre for Human Rights and Miningwatch Canada.

The consortium has been responsible for the submission of the Shadow Report to the CERD, highlighting therein the situations of indigenous peoples in the Philippines. This Shadow Report was published although limited in copies, and distributed to indigenous peoples' communities, organizations and UN agencies. Three major community consultations nationwide were conducted by the consortium in the course of the writing of the Shadow Report. A video of the report was also made possible and which was also submitted to the UNCERD.

The UNCERD, in its August 2009 sessions in Geneva, reviewed the Philippine government in its performance under the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Representatives from indigenous peoples' communities and the consortium attended the Committee sessions and were able to

conduct a lunch briefing for the Committee members. The Committee came up with concluding observations which are of important concern to the indigenous peoples of the Philippines.

The project addressed the importance of engaging with the appropriate government agencies which are at the forefront in the implementation of the concluding observations of the CERD to put them to task on the State obligations under the convention. The project also covered the importance of information dissemination to indigenous peoples and the wider population on matters relating to international human rights instruments vis-à-vis indigenous peoples in the country.

Section 2. Accomplishments (Please refer to your TOR for the Project Deliverables)

Upon the commencement of the project, a project coordinator was immediately identified who was tasked to supervise and ensure the implementation of the project. Likewise, a finance administrator was contracted to manage the project funds in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the project.

On the GO-NGO Forum

The GO-NGO Forum aimed to gather government as well as non-government organizations and representatives of indigenous communities, with the following main objectives:

- ✍ getting updates from the government on what they have done so far or what plans they have for the implementation of the 2009 CERD observations and recommendations ; as well as
- ✍ for the civil society and NGO to also make updates on whether the government has responded on the ground to the CERD observations and recommendations and if they can also make recommendations to the government for its full respect and implementation.

Four (4) preparatory meetings were conducted before the activity involving network organizations of the IPRM. These meetings were for the planning of the forum, identification of the working team including volunteers and documentors as well as facilitators; follow up meetings and finalization of program and event activities.

The forum was attended by government offices and agencies from the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP), the Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC), the Supreme Court – Philippine Justice Academy and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

There were representatives from indigenous communities – from Didipio Nueva Vizcaya, from Sibugay Zamboanga and from Davao. Twelve non-government organizations and support groups participated in the forum.

The program kicked off with a sharing of experiences from the CERD 2009 sessions in Geneva and proceeded with a brief review of the CERD recommendations. The sharing NCIP, CHRP and PHRC each gave a sharing of their respective plans or activities in relation to the CERD recommendations. Towards the end of the forum, a workshop was conducted which resulted to a series of recommendations from NGOs on how to ensure the implementation of the CERD recommendations.

Two more meetings were conducted after the activity for assessments and planning.

On the Website

The purpose of the website was to have a center of information dissemination which is at the same time a resource site for indigenous peoples and organizations. It was developed by FluxFun, a web developer company based in Manila.

Two meetings were conducted with FluxFun to discuss the setting up of the website, the contents and the design. A lot of coordination was made through internet communication.

The website features laws and jurisprudence in both the international and the national level, issues and concerns of indigenous peoples in the country, as well as publications and activities relevant to indigenous peoples.

On October 24, 2010, FluxFun formally turned over the website to IPRM and its administering partner, CIPLC-Dinteg after conducting a training on the administration of the website. It is presently being administered by Brenda Dacpano of CIPLC-Dinteg who was contracted by IPRM for this specific task.

The website continues to feature updates on the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in the country.

Others

Aside from the GO-NGO forum and the development of the website, IPRM was able to participate in various activities in relation with its mandate and with this project, beyond the initially identified budget but with the extended support from this project's budget:

1. Tri-partite review of TOR with UNDP and NEDA; CHR and UNDP
2. Workshop on CHR's legislative agenda; organized by CHR
3. Finance orientation and policies
4. Kapihan on Human Rights organized by the ASEAN Human Rights Working Group
5. Sharing and planning workshop; UNDP
6. Re: Publiko; UNDP and CHR

Section 3. Immediate Impact and Results

The GO-NGO Forum provided a venue for both NGO and GO to comprehensively discuss a UN body recommendations and observations, and come up with lines of collaboration towards the implementation of the recommendations. It also made possible the gathering of NGOs to agree on how to ensure the implementation of the said recommendations by coming up with its own plans and recommendations to the government for its implementation. These will be the bases of assessment for the next country report to the CERD.

The activity also provided IPRM with a wider network, thus broadening the reach for the continued monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations against indigenous peoples. It provided more visibility for IPRM. It was also rolled off further collaboration with CHR and UNDP which is certainly a positive move for IPRM's works.

Section 4. Factors Affecting Implementation

The support from UNDP and CHR is a major factor for the realization of the GO-NGO Forum. The international character and influence attached with UNDP has bridged a lot of relations and resulted to the participation of groups from a wider spectrum. This was supplemented by the impartial stance of the CHR in the issues of human rights and its active role in pursuing with the recommendations and observations of the CERD. The CHR actively contributed in ensuring that the government agencies which were invited, attended the forum.

The common objective of addressing the reality of rampant discrimination among indigenous peoples has also brought together non-government organizations and government agencies to work together, by

agreeing to gather in a forum to discuss points of collaboration and share plans of implementation of the CERD recommendations.

The partners of IPRM played a major role in the technical support, for providing the work force for the activity.

On the one hand, there were negative factors that affected implementation. This includes the difficulty on synchronizing schedules among the network members of IPRM as well as the schedules of government office, for the date of the Forum. This synchronization was necessary to ensure a wider participation from both the GO and the NGO groups. In fact, the original venue of the activity was in Baguio City but this was changed to accommodate some organizations who can only commit to an activity in Manila because of other important activities that they had on the dates prior and after the forum. This was complicated the fact that unification of organizations with IPRM takes a long process due to its nature as a broad and loose network. There was also the prevailing distrust of indigenous peoples on NCIP which had to be dealt with before the communities and some NGOs agreed to participate.

Over all, with the vigorous support from CHR and the assistance from IPRM networks, the project can be rated as a success.

Section 6. Lessons and Insights

This project has proven that GOs and NGOs can come together to discuss on possible collaboration with a common objective of protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples in the country. For IPRM to better serve its clients, the indigenous peoples, it must pursue its collaboration with CHR and other government agencies especially the NCIP and the PHRC. Further projects of IPRM with government agencies will bridge the gap between the GOs and the NGOs. Strengthening engagements with NCIP especially, can have the result of neutralizing the prevailing mutual distrust between the NCIP and indigenous peoples. This is not impossible if both parties continue to engage with each other honestly and sincerely to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The necessity of the forum was realized since it provided a venue for the NGOs to learn of the plans of government agencies for the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. It also gave them a chance to challenge policies and give recommendations to these government agencies. It resulted to a commitment from the government agencies which the NGOs can later on refer to in case of failure of the government to be true to its commitment.

It is however equally important that the project should not end with the end of the forum. The results of the forum need to be brought back to the communities for their awareness and further assessment. These engagements with the communities can be the bases for the next review of the government under the CERD in 2013. Continuing support from UNDP and CHR to pursue this logical necessity is therefor most pragmatic.

Section 7. Recommendations

Continuing activities should be pursued with the following objectives:

1. Raise awareness of indigenous peoples in the communities on development so the implementation of the CERD recommendations;
2. Monitor the performance of the NCIP and other concerned government agencies tasked to ensure the implementation of the CERD;

3. Regular coordination and liaising with NGOs to gather reports, case studies, analysis or recommendations in preparation for the next CERD review on the Philippines;
4. Ensure the continuity of the website.
5. UNDP to take the lead in knowledge sharing strategy and program. Since there are so many products of research, studies, documentation and case studies, UNDP is in the best position to provide effective knowledge sharing.
6. NGOs must be proactive in giving contributions to the website.
7. More projects like this should be conducted for the other human rights treaties.

Section 8. Future Plans

If able to raise the necessary resources, IPRM plans to formalize regional workshops to share the results of the CERD forum, to gather any developments from the communities, and to come up with updates and initial reports for submission to government and international agencies. These reports will be used for advocacy and policy reforms as well.

IPRM, in collaboration with its networks, also plans to build and strengthen human rights defenders in the localities and conduct capacity building activities with priority in critical conflict area and places with contentious development issues.

IPRM will also continue to work with as many NGOs for a wider networking and stronger advocacy. It also plans to seek continuance of its engagements with CHR and UNDP to further ensure the realization of its mandates.

Section 7. Project Resources

100% of project funds were utilized by the end of 2010 and the necessary reports were duly submitted.