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# PHILIPPINES

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Statement delivered by  
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Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations

During the 12th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
UN Headquarters, New York, 30 May 2013

**Mr. Chair,**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to take the floor. The Philippines gives paramount importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, including women, children, the elderly, and indigenous peoples with disability. Allow me to briefly share our policies, initiatives, and programs on the subject.

The Constitution of the Philippines is one of the most progressive constitutions in South-East Asia, with several specific provisions relating to indigenous peoples, including Article XIV (sect. 17), which provides that the State is to recognize, respect and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions and is to consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies.

In 1997, the Philippine Government enacted Republic Act No. 8371, known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), to give effect to the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples rights. The IPRA recognizes indigenous peoples inherent rights, including their right to self-determination, to ancestral domains and the applicability of customary laws governing property rights, to self-determined development and to the requirement that free prior informed consent be obtained in relation to any developments that have impact on them.

IPRA provides for the creation of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as its implementing agency. It is an agency under the office the President that is composed of commissioners representing the seven

ethnographic regions in the country as defined by the IPRA. The NCIP is the primary government agency that formulates and implements policies, plans and programmes for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples.

The NCIP recently promulgated the Revised Guidelines on the Exercise of Free Prior and Informed Consent and Related Processes, consistent with the State's policy that no concession, license, permit or lease, production-sharing agreement, or other undertaking affecting ancestral domains will be granted or renewed without going through the process laid down by law, including the indigenous cultural communities' or indigenous peoples' consent.

**Mr. Chair,**

The Philippines was one of only a handful of countries to have contributed to the voluntary Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues.

As facilitator of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Philippines is committed to the provisions contained therein and looks forward to actively participating in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014.

Finally Mr. Chair, we hope that the Permanent Forum will continue to be used as a platform for a genuine, constructive dialogue on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people and not as a vehicle for issuing general unsubstantiated statements against Member States and other stakeholders.

Thank you.