PHILIPPINES

45TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Annual Panel Discussion on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
23 September 2020, General Assembly Hall

Thank you, Chair.

We welcome this panel discussion on global trends in threats and violence against indigenous human rights defenders including in conflict and post-conflict areas.

It is regretful that threats and violence against IP communities are everyday realities in the Philippines, where armed non-state actor and terrorist organization CPP-NPA-NDF continues to exploit indigenous lands or ancestral domains.

In 2018, IP leaders in Mindanao documented major and systematic atrocities committed by the CPP-NPA-NDF in violation of the IP way of life, customary laws, human rights, and the national law on IP rights. The IP leaders also cited the killing of at least 316 IP elders and leaders for their cooperation with the government and for refusing to embrace the CPP-NPA-NDF's pursuit of armed struggle. The government condemns the CPP-NPA-NDF´s brutality and is taking all steps to hold its leaders to account for its crimes against our IP communities.

As we discuss global trends, we must urge the panelists and the Council to be aware of the pernicious influence of non-state actors in misrepresenting the true interests of the IP communities in the UN system.

We cite, as an example, three speakers from IP communities who were assaulted by the CPP-NPA-NDF, following their participation in a dialogue with the UN SR and the UN system last month. These 3 IP leaders brought to the UN's attention how the CPP-NPA-NDF personalities, purporting to be "human rights defenders" have misused and misrepresented IP issues in the Philippines to raise funds from foreign donors which ultimately support the underground armed movement.

Given these realities, we seek the views of the panelists on how the UN system, the Council and the international community can better listen to the IPs and communities themselves on issues that concern them.

Thank you, Chair. **END.**