A General Statement On

Indigenous Peoples and their rights to development, including their rights to participate in development affecting them

By:

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Delivered at the 19th Session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
23-27 July 2001

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

My name is Jimid Mansayagan from Central Mindanao, Philippines and belonging to the Eruamanen Ne Menyu, one of the 23 un-Islamized indigenous populations of southern Philippines. I am working with the Kebager Te Kedinged or the Lumad Peoples Movement for Self-Determination. I also actively involved with the Institute for Peace and Development Studies (IPDS) of the Southern Christian College (SCC) in Midsayap, Cotabato that works for peace and development among the tri-people (Christian Settlers, Moro and the Lumad Peoples) of Central Mindanao.

I was sent here by our elders and leaders to present our urgent concerns with regards to the issue of development. My coming here was not possible if not of the full supports of Mosignor Eugenio Poma of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Ms. Brigitte Vonasch of the Incomindeos.

The issue of development is among the many urgent issues that confronts our survival as distinct peoples. The indigenous peoples slow recovery is the failure of the whole (governmental) system to recognize, respect and promote the institutions that grant capabilities of the indigenous peoples to participate in the development projects that affects them. Last 29th October 1997, the Government of the Philippines enacted a law known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act 1997 or IPRA. The right of "free and prior inform consent" was clearly provided in this law—seeking consultation and dialogue with the affected communities. Sad to note however, that this essential provision of IPRA was
MANIPULATED BY INFLUENTIAL MINING COMPANIES.

A DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OR DAO WAS ISSUED TO SUSPEND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF "FREE AND PRIOR INFORM CONSENT". THUS, DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. WITH THEIR MARGINALIZED CONDITION OF THE LUMAD PEOPLES, RECOVERY OF THE CONFIDENCE IN THEM TAKES A LONG PROCESS ESPECIALLY WHEN THE SYSTEMATIC PROCESS OF COLONIZATION FORCES THEM TO BE ALIENATED TO THEIR CAPACITY TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY. THE SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES PARTICULARLY IN MINDANAW IS LIKE THAT. WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE LAW, EVEN THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAS YET TO RECOGNISE AND RESPECT THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT MUCH MORE TO CONSIDER THEM AS PARTNERS. AT MOST, ALL WE GOT ARE RHETORIES AND LIP SERVICES BUT OUR SITUATION SPEAKS THE REALITY OF OUR ABJECT SITUATION OF POVERTY. THE INTRUSION OF MINING TO OUR ANCESTRAL DOMAINS, DAM PROJECTS AND THE LARGE SCALE INDUSTRIAL TREE PLANTATIONS CONTINUE TO DISPLACES US. IN THIS LIGHT, WE WOULD LIKE TO RESPECTFULLY DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP THAT IT SHOULD GO INTO THE RECORDS OF THIS 19TH SESSION THAT NOTHING HAS SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE WITH THE SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE PHILIPPINES.

UNDER YOUR EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP HAS ATTAINED AN UNPRECEDENDED SUCCESS. WE OFFER ALL THESE ACHIEVEMENTS TO OUR GRANDCHILDREN'S CHILDREN, HOPING THAT THEY MAY FINALLY LIVE IN PEACE AND SECURITY. EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NO LONGER WITH US IN THE COMING YEARS BUT WE ARE SURE YOU ARE WITH US IN OUR LONG STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND HARMONY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION, EXCELLENCY.