

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION ON AGENDA NUMBER 5

WGIP 87 GOV/SEA. PHL/1

1. We find the Working Group Draft Principles silent on what we consider to be the most fundamental right - the right to self-determination and control of our ancestral lands and domain. We regret that in the draft principles, our right over our land is mentioned only as it relates to the performance of our religious traditions and ceremonies. We find this unacceptable. We therefore call on the Working Group to support our demand for self-determination.
2. Out of the 7 items in the Draft Principle, 4 items deal with our cultural rights, none on our right to self-determination. This we find inadequate and dangerous as it tends to substantiate current official policy in the Philippines and elsewhere as merely/principally "cultural entities", thus limiting the scope of our struggle to the cultural realm. The Marcos dictatorship was good at defining our problems as "cultural". Regretably, even the newly ratified constitution calls us "cultural minorities".
3. Considering that we are under constant attack from various forces (military, transnational corporations, discriminatory land laws, etc) which can lead to our annihilation as a people, and considering further that it takes years for International Standards to be accepted and made operation, we support the recommendation of the ~~International Commission on International Humanitarian Issues~~ Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICHI) for a recourse procedure. This will help ensure our survival. We also support the ICHI recommendation for the Working Group "to have its meetings in countries or locations of indigenous communities." This is consistent with the principle of broad and democratic debates. Likewise, we support the recommendation that the financial and human resources of the Working Group should be increased substantially. Along this line, we propose that we study the possibility for the indigenous peoples and nations to contribute to the UN Fund for Indigenous Peoples.
4. Finally, Madame chairperson we recommend that the Working Group publish a simple Primer on our rights as guaranteed by the UN. The Primer should enable our people to have a weapon to confront our oppressors and exploiters.

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