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**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Fifteenth Session
9-20 May 2015, New York**

**Intervention on Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the
Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples**

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Thank you Mister Chair for this opportunity to speak. Warm greetings everyone!

I represent the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Philippines, which has consistently participated in the Permanent Forum since its First Session in 2002, recognizing the important role of the Forum in advancing indigenous peoples' rights. The Forum has allowed us to raise the issues and concerns of the *Igorots* and other indigenous peoples of the Philippines. We have forwarded numerous recommendations to the Permanent Forum, in line with our struggle to defend our rights to land and resources that are being robbed by the State and foreign corporations.

However, we are deeply alarmed that after 14 sessions of the Permanent Forum, and nine years since the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the plight of indigenous peoples in the Philippines has turned from bad to worse. The Philippine government enacted the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act and established the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) supposedly to promote the rights and welfare of Philippine indigenous peoples. But these have been proven inutile in protecting our rights. In fact, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples has served as an instrument in violating IP rights. And the UNDRIP and previous recommendations of the Permanent Forum have not been implemented at all.

Instead, the Philippine government continues its reign of terror, committing crimes against indigenous peoples, and outrightly violating our collective rights to our ancestral lands and plunder of our resources through destructive mining and energy projects. Its counter-insurgency program *Oplan Bayanihan* has resulted in the militarization of our communities, extrajudicial killings, development aggression and other human rights violations committed with impunity against indigenous peoples. Under President Benigno Aquino's administration, at least one indigenous person is killed every month, with a total of more than 90 victims from July 2010 to April 2016.

To cite a few recent cases:

- In April 2016, the Vice Chairperson of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Mr. Xavier Akien, experienced death threats through surveillance by armed men, which, in our experience, often leads to extrajudicial killing or enforced disappearance.
- On April 1, 2016, in Kidapawan, Southern Philippines, the government brutally responded to the demand for food aid by more than five thousand farmers and Lumad indigenous peoples with guns and bullets, leaving 2 farmers dead, more than 70 people wounded, and hundreds arrested. Indigenous peoples bear the brunt of climate change, while suffering the negative impacts of corporate mining, extractive industries and government neglect of basic social services. In the past few months,

El Nino has left hundreds of farmers' families hungry, yet the Philippine government heartlessly denied them the basic human right to food.

- In 2015, around five thousand Lumad indigenous people in Mindanao fled their homes due to military operations, harassment and forced recruitment by paramilitary groups.
- Indigenous schools run by non-government organizations continue to be attacked by State military forces and paramilitary groups, thereby depriving indigenous children and youth of the right to education.
- Discrimination of indigenous peoples was again proven in the government's denial of our participation to the Party List System in the recently concluded national elections.

These are just a few of the ethnocidal acts committed against indigenous peoples, which reflect the worsening situation similarly experienced by indigenous peoples around the world. **We thus urge the Permanent Forum to take immediate and decisive steps to end the extrajudicial killing and indigenous peoples' rights violations, and the State-driven misery faced by indigenous peoples in the Philippines.**

We recommend:

- That the Permanent Forum establish mechanisms to monitor and ensure the implementation of UNDRIP, and its recommendations at the country level.
- That the Philippine Government take steps to respect and protect indigenous peoples' rights to lands, resources, social and economic development, cultural integrity, education and health.
- That oppressive laws, policies and programs that displace our communities, plunder our resources, destroy our environment, hinder our development, and violate our national sovereignty be repealed/scrapped, such as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, *Oplan Bayanihan*, Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, among others.
- That the Philippine Government be urged to comply with its obligations under International Humanitarian Law, the UNDRIP, and other international human rights instruments to which the Philippine government is a signatory.

Thank you for your attention.