

CHRP STATEMENT 5 (On Health and Education of indigenous women, children & youth) [19 April 2018 | 10am – 1pm]

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of the Philippines is categorical in recognizing IPs' right to special measures for the improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention are given to the rights and special needs of indigenous women, elderly, youth, children, and differently-abled persons.^[2]

In the National Inquiry conducted by the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) last year, the primary concern of IP women was their health, particularly their reproductive health. The "no home birthing policy" of the government had an effect on the customs and traditions of IPs. The government for its part claimed that it implemented the "no home birthing policy" to address the rising number of maternal deaths since 2011 thus local government units (LGUs) enacted local ordinances penalizing delivery through the assistance of traditional

birth attendants.^[3] Mainstream medical practices also conflict with IPs traditional health systems. Another concern was that health facilities in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) were not established. Municipalities and provinces with large GIDA resulted in a large population of IPs in these areas having poor health indicators compared to people in more accessible municipalities and provinces. Also, while the delivery of health services were devolved to the LGUs as it should be, the delivery of health service to IPs is not simple as IP communities are geographically defined by their ancestral domains, which may be covered by geographic areas of various sizes and, at times, fall under the jurisdiction of several LGUs. Hence, the delivery of health services vary from one LGU to another. ^[4] Another pressing issue is that most IP children are not registered at birth because they were not born in hospitals or health centers.^[5]

The National Inquiry also revealed that IP youth lacked the opportunity to pursue their education. Though they are conscious

of their role in preserving their indigenous groups' cultural heritage, they are not equipped to do so since the educational system do not address said need. They believe that the government's scholarship programs also do not consider the current limitations in their abilities and socio-cultural backgrounds. During the hearing there was a finding too of real threat to the IP youth. Resource persons from Maguindanao and Compostela Valley Province and in various other IP Communities ^[7] testified that there are continuing efforts of certain groups to recruit IP youths to join the armed struggle.^[6] Thus, it is imperative that the government ensures that the security of IPs & the peaceful enjoyment of their land be guaranteed to them.

[1] Per the DOLE's identification of issues and concerns in monitoring the right to development of IPs during the Baguio Conference on the IP Right to Development

[2] IPRA, Section 25

[3] Ilagan, Luzviminda C., and Emmi A. De Jesus. "House Resolution No. 1531." *Home | Gabriela Women's Party*, <http://gabrielawomensparty.net/sites/gwp/files/HR1531%20Investigate%20DOH%20No%20Home%20Birthing%20Policy.pdf>. Accessed 28 November 2017.

[4] Philippines, Department of Health, et al. "DOH-NCIP-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2013-01." *The Official Website of National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Region 6 and 7 – National Commission on Indigenous Peoples*, 19 April 2013, <http://ncipro67.com.ph/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DOH-NCIP-DILG-JOINT-MC-NO-2013-01-dtd-19-April-2013.pdf>. Accessed 28 November 2017.

[5] Per the statement of Lettie Magango (representing Bantuanon and Ati Group, Odiongan, Romblon) during the 2nd public hearing in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

[6] Per the statement of Ruel Morfing (Youth leader, Teduray) during the 4th public hearing in Davao City

[7] Per the statement of Kalib Macapagal (Taubuid) during the 2nd public hearing in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan